

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE FIFTY-SIX
VINĀYAKAS IN BANARAS AND THEIR ORIGINS

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Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
of the University of London
September 1999

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Abstract

This thesis investigates a unique and hitherto unresearched phenomenon in the sacred city of Banaras: the fifty-six Vināyakas. These Vināyakas are arranged throughout the city in seven notional concentric circles with eight directionally oriented images in each. The Vināyakas are fully documented for the first time: each one is photographed, drawn, described and analysed. Textual references are given for each and a methodology is developed for dating them into four periods over twelve centuries. The grouping is situated within the evolution of the city, within the religious history of the origins and development of Gaṇeśa, the textual and scriptural history of Banaras, and symbolically and ritually within the concept of the *maṇḍala*. The Māhātmya in which they are first described, the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, is dated and analysed. The text, which establishes the Lordship of Viśvanātha, relates the religious history of Banaras chronologically through a series of myths which simultaneously effect the cosmologisation of Kāśī. The concept of the *maṇḍala* is examined and it is found that although the Vināyakas meet all the criteria of a physical *maṇḍala* they are not themselves a *maṇḍala*. The only *maṇḍala* is Kāśī itself which the Vināyakas mark out and protect. The origin of the Vināyakas is investigated and the dynasty and ruler responsible for their installation is putatively identified. Because the establishment of the Vināyakas is effectively the introduction of the concept of Kāśī as a complete microcosm and the beginning of the process of its cosmologisation, the dating of the group of Vināyakas permits the dating of a major chapter in the religious history of north India.

Acknowledgements

Whatever the conventions, this thesis must first acknowledge and salute Gaṇeśa, my companion and inspiration for three years. In her foreword to Courtright's book, *Gaṇeśa: Lord of Obstacles, Lord of Beginnings*, Wendy Doniger described her feelings about writing a book on Gaṇeśa: 'A book about Gaṇeśa, what fun would that be!' –and fun it was, from the moment I started doing research on Gaṇeśa, to completion, and I have nobody to acknowledge for consoling me during difficult times: there have not been any. In India the enterprise was received with much enthusiasm and over the years many have taken a keen interest in the progress of this research. The fact that I was researching an unknown aspect of Gaṇeśa worship added an extra dimension. Over the years many people took the role of 'Vināyakas' by removing the obstacles I encountered when writing this thesis and when doing fieldwork in India. The main reason I enjoyed the last three years so much was because they all gave me a wonderful time and proved that even when doing research one is permitted enjoyment. I would therefore like to thank everybody who, throughout, has contributed to this thesis.

I would like to thank the following scholars in Banaras who have shared their vast knowledge of the city and its secrets with me: Professor N.P. Joshi, Professor M. N. Tiwari (Head of the Department of Arts, Banaras Hindu University (BHU)), Professor Rao (Telugu Department, BHU), Banu Shankar Mehta, A. K. Narain, Sukhdev Singh and Rachana Sharma. I would like to thank the staff in the American Institute for Indian Studies for facilitating some of the photos in this thesis, in particular Mr J. Yadav for his kind cooperation and Dr M. A. Dhaky for the interest he showed and for our Saturday afternoon discussions. I am also grateful to Kedarnāth Vyās for his excellent guidance on the temples and shrines and for all the time he spent discussing various aspects of the Pañcakrośī Yātrā.¹ Invaluable, too, was the knowledge Professor Rana P. B. Singh shared with me. Many thanks to him for taking me on two Pañcakrośī Yātrās, for the help he gave me regarding the geography of the city and for giving me permission to use his wonderful maps in this thesis. For translating a part of the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa* into English, I would like to thank Bruce J. Graham and Devanāth Tripathi. Many thanks to all those 'scholars-to-be' in Banaras who provided constant company and stimulation: Annika, Bruce, Corvin, Dan, Elaine, Jason, Jeanne, Loriliai, Manon, Marilyn, Mia, Signe, Tavis and Uma. Last but not least, I would like to express my special gratitude to Mr Virendra Singh, Sushila Mausi, Kashika, Annu, Suju, Santu and their family in Jaipur for all the Hindi they taught me, and above all for accepting me as a daughter and sister.

¹ When rendered in Hindi, the Sanskrit *pañca-krośī* often seems to lose the 'r' of *krośī* as well as the final 'a' of *pañca*. Occasionally, therefore, in this thesis, and especially in the Bibliography where it occurs in the titles of publications, it will be written as *pañc-kośī*.

In Bombay special thanks go to Dr Devangana Desai for the keen interest she took in the iconographic aspect of this thesis and for introducing me to many Gaṇeśa lovers in the city such as Mr and Mrs Haridas Svali, who shared with me their passion for art and Gaṇeśa. I also would like to take this opportunity to thank all my friends in Bombay who have been my friends since the first time I came to India in 1991, especially Neha Majumdar, without whom I might never have been interested in India or Gaṇeśa, and whose family spoiled me whenever I was around. Gratitude and many thanks also to Kumud Aunty and Bhupat Uncle, Meenal, Ajay and Hetal for all their affection and fun! I would like to thank the Mathur family in Delhi for their hospitality, and special thanks to Copal and Dipali for sharing their knowledge of 'naughty' Gaṇeśa stories with me.

In London I would like to thank everyone who made the change from India bearable and enjoyable: Chris for her friendship, sharing her home and for all the support she gave me; Alison, for proof-reading, making valuable suggestions and for making these years unforgettable; Anne, for her support and the encouragement throughout the last year of my research; and Simon Brodbeck and Sîan Hawthorne for proofreading the whole thesis. I feel I have been privileged to do research in one of the most dynamic and enthusiastic departments of SOAS; many thanks to Dr Judith Coney, the postgraduate tutor and to Maryjayne Hillman, the ever-enthusiastic secretary. Many words of gratitude must also go to Mr Simon Weightman, my supervisor and 'Remover of Obstacles', for the kilos of chocolate biscuits, the enthusiasm, interest, and creative energy.

My thanks are also due to the Rotary Foundation-Belgium, the British Academy and the Trustees of the Jordan Travel Fellowship in the Department of the Study of Religions at SOAS for providing financial support.

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Orthographical Notes

Words, nouns as well as personal names, taken from Sanskrit, Hindi, Arabic and Persian are given with diacritics.² However, for clarity's sake the names of places and of rivers are given in anglicised form where appropriate. In the glossary these words appear with full diacritics. English words derived from non-English ones, such as 'Puranic' and 'Brahmanic', are given without diacritics.

The difference between the expression of final 'a' in Sanskrit and Hindi constitutes a problem for transliteration. In Sanskrit a final 'a' is expressed, but it is mute in Hindi. Words such as '*maṇḍala*', '*Vināyaka*', '*kuṇḍa*' and '*Gaṇeśa*' will be spelt as in Sanskrit unless, through their use in Hindi, such a spelling looks and sounds incongruous or inappropriate. For example '*ghāṭa*' will be written *ghāṭ*. Personal names such as Kuberⁿāth and Kedarnāth will not be written with a final 'a'. No single convention is capable of handling all of the situations which occur in the course of this thesis without producing anomalies or absurdities. It is possible that to apply common sense, as is implied in the rule above, may leave too much to discretion. If, however, the rule is applied consistently, as it is believed to be here, it is doubtful if any reader will mistake what is intended.

All non-English terms are given in italics, as are the titles of texts referred to. When a non-English word is treated according to the rules of English grammar, as for example when made plural by adding the letter 's', the whole word will be italicised even though this may result in a word which does not occur in the non-English language in question. However, when the word refers to a genre rather than a specific named text, as in the case of '*Purāṇa*' or '*Sūtra*', the word is not italicised, and is given with an initial capital. The names of gods and persons are not italicised.

² For the use of diacritics the conventions in McGregor (1995 (1972):xxii-xxiii) are followed.

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INTRODUCTION

All theses are born of a burning question. The question that has inspired and sustained this thesis is the existence in Banaras of a group of fifty-six Gaṇeśa-Vināyakas spread throughout the city, arranged in seven notional concentric circles with eight Vināyakas in each. Although many of the Banaras *paṇḍits* knew of the fifty-six Vināyakas from the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, the major Māhātmya of Kāśī which forms part of the *Skanda Purāṇa*, only a handful of people knew where more than a small number of them were. Further questioning and research soon revealed that they were an almost totally unstudied phenomenon. This was surprising in many ways: such a grouping of fifty-six Gaṇeśas is unique in the subcontinent, the next largest grouping being the eight Gaṇeśas near Poona; Banaras is such an important religious centre of sanctity; and Gaṇeśa is such an attractive deity, visibly omnipresent throughout the city. However, so little seemed to be known about them that it was impossible initially to assess their past and present importance. Certainly in terms of scholarship they were uncharted territory and the first task of this research was to document them fully.

Locating the Vināyakas required a familiarity with Banaras, a good knowledge of Hindi, guidance from guidebooks and from local people, and considerable persistence. They were measured, photographed where possible, drawn, and their features analysed. Then came one of the more innovative phases of this research, which proved in retrospect to be the key that unlocked many of the problems regarding the Vināyakas: the construction of a methodology for dating the images. The methodology is explained in Chapter Four which provides, for the first time, full documentation of each Vināyaka. Here the kind assistance of two senior art historians should be acknowledged: Professor M. N. Tiwari, Head of the Department of the History of Art at Banaras Hindu University, and Dr Devangana Desai of the Bombay Asiatic Society. The range of dates from the ninth century to the twentieth presented a particular problem. The iconography of Gaṇeśa has been treated in scholarly literature but often only as a fine exemplar of Indian religious art. The Vināyakas are images from across twelve centuries, some of whose condition renders them almost unidentifiable and few of which attract the art historian aesthetically or the historian of religion iconographically. While the existing literature was of some value, a good visual memory and visits to many museums, sites and temples across north India provided a sound foundation for this initial task.

While the findings of this initial phase of the research provided the answers to the questions 'what' and 'where' to some extent, it became evident from the range of dates attributed to the Vināyakas that the images and their periods and locations would not hold the answers to the crucial questions of 'why', 'how', 'by whom' and 'when' they were established. These would

have to be found through other means. Accordingly, a thorough reexamination was conducted of existing scholarship relating to three areas of enquiry: the history and evolution of the city of Banaras, the historical development of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa, and the literary, mythological, ritual and iconographic sources relating to Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa in Banaras. Gradually there emerged a probable explanation for the presence of these fifty-six Vināyakas in Banaras, the likely date for their establishment and even the most likely instigator of their institutionalisation. Since, however, the argument is based on taking a concerted view of the materials from all these different fields, there arose a problem of exposition: namely, how best to present and structure the argument. Ideally, the central characters, the fifty-six Vināyakas, should be introduced first, but to do so would raise many unanswered questions at the outset. To avoid this it was decided to set the scene in three chapters which would successively describe, firstly, the historical evolution of the city of Banaras in order to contextualise the establishment of the Vināyakas; secondly, the various stages in the development of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa, thus locating the fifty-six Vināyakas in the religious history of north India; and, thirdly, the cultural sources relating to the presence of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa in Banaras, thus providing a mythological context. With this material in place, the fifty-six Vināyakas could be then introduced and documented as fully as possible in Chapter Four. Chapter Five deals with the concept of the *maṇḍala* in order to assess the ritual context of the Vināyakas. Finally, the full thesis is presented in the Conclusion. Were the argument presented sequentially, the order of exposition would have been self evident. Since, however, the argument here depends on the simultaneous presence of disparate material from a number of discrete fields, every effort has been made to indicate in the first three chapters which components will have a particular relevance to the final argument.

As explained above, the documentation of the Vināyakas is delayed until Chapter Four because the various contexts in which the Vināyakas are to be situated have to be examined first. The first context, the history of Banaras, has been addressed in Chapter One. The main problems of dealing with the history of Banaras are the bias of some of its exponents, the difficulty of disentangling the history of the settlement of the present city, and the enormous lacunae in the sources available for a reconstruction of the history both of the city and of its various sites and sacred centres. The only claim to originality regarding the treatment in these chapters is in its emphasis. The purpose of this essentially introductory chapter is to provide the framework within which an attempt can be made to date the formation of the Vināyaka grouping.

The second context within which the Vināyakas need to be examined is their religious history. The question of the origins and development of Gaṇeśa is dealt with in Chapter Two, making use of the considerable existing scholarship on the subject. While much of the literature is concerned with how Gaṇeśa came to have an elephant head, in this chapter it is not

considered a major question.³ The question that warrants further investigation is how the somewhat gloomy Vināyaka of the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* became the happy and adored Gaṇeśa who is invoked at the beginning of enterprises to guarantee success. Work is already well advanced in demonstrating that Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa has borrowed some attributes from Kubera and become associated with Lakṣmī, and this thesis was in its final stages when Thapan's Delhi University doctorate was published and a review copy received. This excellent study, *Understanding Gaṇapati* (Thapan 1997), reaches similar conclusions to those reached here and takes them further by showing that one element in the dynamic which propelled Gaṇeśa to prominence was his adoption as patron of trading castes and Jains. It is gratifying to have one's own initial conclusions confirmed and developed and, due to Thapan's analysis, it has been possible in this chapter to add some further material on Jyeṣṭhā. One of the strengths of Thapan's work is her insistence on the way that Gaṇeśa developed differently and in different stages in various regions. This consideration becomes important later in the thesis when seeking to identify the stage of development and the region in question which is represented in the concept of Vināyaka captured in the fifty-six Vināyaka grouping in Banaras.

The third context within which the Vināyakas need to be situated is that of the textual sources relating to Banaras. This is examined in Chapter Three, which also deals with the cult of the Pañca-Vināyakas where it has been possible for the first time to link the iconography to a textual source. One of the major problems for anyone working on the religious history of India is the dating of the Purāṇas. Many are dated by Rocher with a range of at least six hundred years and most are composites compiled from different texts of varying dates. Fortunately very little of importance to this thesis depends on the dates of a Purāṇa, except the dating of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* which it has been possible to date to within at least one hundred years. Excellent preliminary work had been done by Eck on the various Sanskrit sources for the study of Banaras. The main contribution of this chapter, however, is the analysis of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. Eck examines the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* in a traditional and fruitful way examining its structure and how mythology was used as the means for effecting the cosmologisation of Banaras. For example, she shows how, in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, Śivaśarman, who is taken on a journey round the cosmos, is told how the regnant Lords of each *loka* acquired their status through having performed severe penance and having established *liṅgas* in Kāśī. In this way each part of the cosmos is represented in Kāśī and Kāśī is responsible for the status of the *lokas*. Here, attention is drawn to the fact that the sequential organising principle was chronology.

³ It seems that Kuṣāṇa sculptors in Mathura produced elephant-headed images and these were identified as Vināyaka. History does not record whether they were made to order as Vināyakas or whether Brahmins identified the images of other beings as Vināyakas. From this point onwards Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa had a clear visual identity and his mythology initially followed his iconography until they became interdependent at a later stage.

Chapter Four is entirely original since it documents, describes and dates each of the Vināyakas for the first time. With regard to this chapter, for the sake of presenting the material in a manner convenient to the reader, photographs and drawings of the Vināyakas are included in a separately bound Appendix to the thesis. This permits the text relating to each image to be accessed at the same time as the accompanying illustrations. It should be emphasised that the sketches are included to assist the identification of the contours and features of the photographs and make no claim to be perfect representations of the statues. Because of the inclusion of an Appendix volume translations of certain key texts relevant to the thesis have also been provided. The translation of the *Vināyaka Kalpa* from the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* is followed by that of the *Vināyaka Śānti* from the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti*. These are followed by summaries of chapters thirty-nine to fifty-five of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, and a complete translation of chapters fifty-six and fifty-seven. Chapter fifty-eight then follows in summary. After the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* there are descriptions of the *Mudgala Purāṇa* and the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa* with translations of the relevant chapters from the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa*.

Chapter Five examines the question of whether the fifty-six Vināyakas constitute a *maṇḍala*. This is in order to locate the Vināyakas ritually and symbolically. The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* does not use the word *maṇḍala* for the Vināyakas, but refers to each of the concentric circles as a 'cover'. The theory and characteristics of *maṇḍalas* are examined and the three main criteria for identifying a *maṇḍala* are applied to the grouping of the Vināyakas. Nonetheless, for reasons given in this chapter, it is argued that the Vināyakas do not themselves constitute a *maṇḍala*. Various other features concerning the Vināyakas are addressed in the final part of the chapter, such as their number, proximity to water, and other Vināyakas mentioned in the *Khaṇḍa* and found in Banaras. Finally the problems concerned with Dhuṇḍhirāja Vināyaka are discussed.

The Conclusion seeks to date the establishment of the grouping of the fifty-six Vināyakas and to identify, if not the originator, then the dynasty responsible. Whereas Chapter Five utilises the materials presented in Chapters Three and Four, the Conclusion uses materials presented in Chapters One and Two as well. The lack of hard historical evidence means that the hypothesis presented in the Conclusion can never be proved but it is argued from the totality of circumstantial evidence and from the elimination of unsuitable alternatives. If the conclusions reached are correct, the implication must be that the agent of the grouping's establishment stands at the beginning of a process which later emerges as the mature ritual and symbolic microcosm that is Banaras today.

CHAPTER ONE

Banaras and its History: Contextualising the Vināyakas Historically

The fifty-six Vināyakas, the subject of this thesis, are located in Banaras.⁴ This chapter traces the relevant periods in the history of Banaras which assist the contextualisation of the fifty-six Vināyaka phenomenon. An examination of the existing histories of Banaras reveals that accounts are patchy; that is, they reflect the uneven coverage of the sources with regard to each period. Some works portray Banaras as an eternally unchanging centre of sanctity which was periodically desecrated and destroyed during the period of 'foreign' Muslim rule.⁵ Such a portrayal chooses to ignore that the major centre of settlement shifted southwards and changed greatly throughout the centuries; that the final recension of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, which encapsulates the cosmologisation of Banaras, took place during the Delhi Sultanate; that Banaras witnessed periods of revival⁶ as well as destruction and that Banaras developed greatly as a pilgrimage site under the Mughals; and that many of the sites and even structures now held in great sanctity, were of Buddhist origin. This account will concentrate on the period prior to 1350 CE, which is the approximate date for the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, because it is clear from that text that the grouping of the fifty-six Vināyakas was fully established by that time. The later history will be dealt with in summary but, throughout, the emphasis will be on the evolution of the city both in terms of its settlement and its development as a sacred centre. The purpose of this chapter is to provide the background necessary later in this thesis for proposing possible dates for the founding of the fifty-six Vināyaka *maṇḍala*.

Sherring (1975:2) writes: 'The part of the city along the *ghāṭs* has no right to be called ancient. The northern boundary of Banaras, is the oldest portion of the present city, while that large extent of buildings lying south and west beyond it is chiefly of recent date'. The earliest traces of the history of Banaras are found on the Rajghat plateau, which is situated to the north of the present day city, at the confluence of the Ganga and the Varana rivers. From the very limited archaeological excavations in this area, it is clear that there are four main periods into which the early history can be divided: first, from 800 to 500 BCE; second, from 500 BCE to 100 BCE ; third, from 100 BCE to 200 CE; fourth, from 200 CE until the end of the Gupta

⁴ Throughout the thesis the name Banaras will be used but the other names of Kāśī, Benares and Vārāṇasī, as well as the epithets Avimukta, Mahāśmaśāna, Rudravāsa and Ānandavana, will occur in quotations and elsewhere as appropriate. The various names and epithets are discussed in Eck (1993:25-33), which should be supplemented with Motichand (1985:2-6).

⁵ Motichand's *Kāśī kā Itihās* (1985), Altekar's *Banaras and Sārnāth* (1947), and Sukul's *Vārāṇasī Vaibhav* (1977) and *Vārāṇasī through the Ages* (1974) are good examples of this tendency.

⁶ In 1868 Sherring (1975) wrote: 'The city presently known as Banaras was chiefly erected under the Muhammadan rule'.

period (600 CE). Despite the Epics⁷ and Puranic myths tracing the history of the city and the Kāśī dynasty back centuries before Gautama Buddha, the archaeological evidence available does not predate the eighth century BCE. The excavations of the first period, dated between 800 and 500 BCE, show that the settlement on the plateau was mainly centred on the confluence of the Ganga and the Varana rivers. The settlement was small with no mud brick buildings and the material evidence suggests that the inhabitants were skilled in making various types of pottery and metal objects. None of the metal objects found indicate the existence of an agricultural society. This suggests that the people on the Rajghat plateau were involved in the manufacture of objects and utensils, although it is unlikely that they did not know some form of agriculture. Only one terracotta image depicting a female figure has been found, perhaps suggestive of fertility worship in some form or that these people worshipped 'the mother' as a fertility symbol (B. P. Singh 1985:254-256). The scant archaeological evidence available suggests that the earliest settlement on the plateau was not structured according to an urban pattern.

Some historians, for example Motichand and Sherring, offer an elaborate version of the Kāśī dynasty based on the genealogies found in the Purāṇas (Motichand 1985:22-25; Sherring 1975:introduction). Other surveys of the Kāśī dynasty are included in the work of Pargiter (1922:101) and Dutt (1956:3). The various accounts describing the exploits of the Kāśī dynasty suggest that this dynasty flourished between the eighth and the sixth centuries BCE. By the time of Gautama Buddha, however, power in the region had passed to the Kośālas (Motichand 1985:28-30), whose capital was located in Magadha.

From the sixth century BCE onwards, the history of Kāśī is documented in the Buddhist Jātakas which describe the kingdom as one of the sixteen *janapadas* or 'tribal strongholds', situated next to Kosala and Magadha. The archaeological remains of this second period coincide with the foundation of these *janapadas*. Important findings include a rampart and a moat, two characteristics which define an early Indian city, thus suggesting that at the onset of the sixth century BCE Banaras had reached some stage of urbanisation.⁸ In 1868 Sherring described this rampart, running from the Varana river into the Adampura area, which he considered to be the remains of an old boundary (1975:8-11).⁹ According to Sherring there

⁷ The *Mahābhārata* mentions a tribe called the Kāśīs and although it is possible that their territory was in the vicinity of the Rajghat plateau, there is no confirmatory evidence that it was on the plateau itself. The earliest mention of Kāśī is found in the *Atharva Veda* in which Kāśī is mentioned along with the Videhas and the Kośālas (Dutt 1956:3). In later Purāṇas the Kāśīs are referred to as a tribe living in the kingdom of Kāśī. For further detail on the mention of Kāśī in different Purāṇas, see Pargiter (1922:101) and Motichand (1985:22-25).

⁸ B. P. Singh (1985:257) redefines the notion of an early Indian city. According to him a city, up to the middle of the first millennium BCE, was first a centre of political power and subsequently developed its economy. As a consequence it has been argued that an important characteristic of the seat of power was the presence of some form of defence, be it in the form of a city wall or a moat. In the case of Banaras, both are present.

⁹ This embankment may have extended to the Ganga, continuing its present direction, but Sherring (1975) offers a second hypothesis by suggesting that it may have formed a right angle and extended to the Ganga by the Tilya Nāla. If this is the case, then the portion after the right angle to the extending ridge must have been removed in order to make space for the city to grow southwards. Prinsep considers this ridge to be a rampart constructed by

are grounds for believing that part of the city did indeed exist on a small strip of land on the banks of the Ganga, perhaps as far as Mān Mandir *ghāt*, even before the common era. If the moat and the rampart were characteristic of a capital city in ancient India then Banaras had reached a stage of preliminary urbanisation at an early period. Besides the moat and the rampart, however, there are no other structures indicating urbanisation. Although there is an increase in the number of artefacts found in the levels of the second period, animal husbandry, agriculture and hunting seem to have been the main means of subsistence. The artefacts show a certain degree of skill, suggesting that small industries had been established. Buddhist sources describe the early Banaras of the Buddha as a significant centre for textiles,¹⁰ cosmetics and perfume, but there is no archaeological evidence of this. Overall, the material evidence from this second period indicates economic prosperity which may have been the result of some form of industrialisation or trade. Except for archaeological evidence indicating that the mother goddess cult continued, the religious life of this period is unattested by the excavations.

North-east of the city was Sarnath where the Buddha preached his first sermon. According to Buddhist chronicles from Sri Lanka, Banaras was already a place of great learning by the time of the Buddha. After his preaching in the Deer Park, Sarnath gradually became an important centre of specifically Buddhist learning. In the Maurya period a *stūpa* was constructed there by the emperor Aśoka and around the beginning of the common era Sarnath was renowned for its school of Buddhist art.

From the downfall of the Kāśī dynasty until the Gupta period, there are few literary sources reporting the specific history of Kāśī, suggesting that the kingdom had lost its influence and was incorporated in the larger empires of the Kośalas, the Śīśunāgas and the Mauryas. Consequently, scholars offer general reconstructions of the history of north India, acknowledging that details of the city's political history are simply not available. The excavations on the Rajghat plateau, however, show that between the second century BCE and the third century CE, which is the designated third period in the development of Vināyaka iconography, the city experienced new cultural influences coming from the foreign powers who invaded the north of India.¹¹ After the decline of Banaras as a political power, the inhabitants were probably concerned with improving their economic welfare, for there is evidence of well organised trade and considerable progress in the copper and iron industries. A seal with the

the Muslims to attack the city. However, Sherring contradicts him on this point, stating that the ridge is far more ancient than the Muslim period. Havell (1905), on the other hand, completely ignores Sherring's findings and states that the present city has hardly shifted since the earliest days. Based on the observations of some Greek rulers such as Megasthenes, who said that the Aryans love space, he argues that the city was very spread out.

¹⁰ Motichand (1985:59-60) refers to a passage of the *Kautilya Arthaśāstra* (trans G. Shastri, part 1:191) which mentions that fact that Banaras was famous for its cloth

¹¹ Indo-Greeks, Indo-Scythians, Indo-Parthians and Kuṣāṇas invaded the north of India and established their rule (Motichand 1985:59).

inscription *gavayāka śreṇīye* or the 'Guild of Milkmen' suggests that urban life was organised into guilds. There was also a sudden increase in luxury goods and the earliest remains of brick houses date from this period. There is evidence indicating that these houses were constructed to plan and that the planning extended throughout the whole city.¹² Excavations reveal that during this period the area became densely populated.

In contrast to the paucity of material evidence from the first and the second periods, the religious life of this period is reasonably well documented. Seals and terracotta figures indicate the influence of Buddhism in some parts of the city. In the latter part of this period some seals indicate the rise of the god Śiva. However, most of the sources reflecting the religious life of the city indicate that the majority of the people maintained their own religious traditions, probably either goddess or fertility worship (B. P. Singh 1985:260-263). In this context it is interesting to compare these findings with Buddhist and Jain sources describing the religious life of the city. According to these, Banaras was not known for its Śiva cult, but rather for the worship of *yakṣas* and *nāgas*. However, the *Mahāmāyūrī* (transl. Lévi 1905), a treatise giving a list of the existing *yakṣas*, classifies Śiva as a *yakṣa* and mentions that in Banaras the worship of the *yakṣa* Mahākāla was widespread. The Jātakas give abundant evidence of a *yakṣa* cult in Banaras¹³ and, based on the excavation of *yakṣa* statues, scholars have suggested that the *yakṣa pūjā* was present until the Śuṅga period (180-73 BCE). The evidence in the Jātakas is supported by Jain literature which describes three *yakṣas* called Caṇḍi Tidung, Maṇibhadra and Puṇyabhadra (Motichand 1985:32-33; V. S. Agarwala 1960:198-201). The detailed story of the *yakṣa* Harikeśa in the *Matsya Purāṇa* suggests the early presence of such a cult in Banaras. Eck has argued that the *yakṣas* were autochthonous deities worshipped near trees and ponds (1993:51-54) but, if this worship were autochthonous, it should have survived on the Rajghat plateau and no evidence points to this. The presence of *yakṣas* in the Buddhist and the Jain literature suggests rather that the worship of *yakṣas* was imported by the Buddhists at an early stage of Buddhism.

The fourth and last period excavated at Rajghat covers the Gupta period, extending from the fourth to the seventh centuries CE. Contrary to the general belief that the Gupta period witnessed a decline in urbanism but was still a golden period for the arts, literature and sciences, the Rajghat findings prove that there was no such decline on the plateau. On the contrary, everything indicates that the city experienced a period of unsurpassed prosperity. Nowhere else in northern India have excavations uncovered such a large number of residences, with vast underground structures believed to be storage space for grain. This has led scholars to suggest that the city became an important trade centre. An interesting finding is a seal reading

¹² Houses were built in rows and were separated by a lane or an open space. Sturdy foundations show that the inhabitants of the city took the construction of their houses very seriously (B. P. Singh 1985:261-262).

¹³ Eck (1993:54).

vārāṇasy-āranyaka-śreṇi or the 'Guild of the Foresters of Vārāṇasī' which suggests that, outside the city, the woods and forests were being farmed and cut. Other seals and small terracotta figurines reveal that the Śaiva cult and Buddhism had both gained influence.¹⁴ Representations of Viṣṇu are notably absent. However, some of the Vaiṣṇava symbols, such as the conch and the *cakra*, are depicted on seals implying that the Viṣṇu cult had some support. The rise of Viṣṇu, Śiva and other gods in the north of India is described in detail by Eck (1993:60-79) and need not be repeated here.

A separate group of seals were those issued by a college or an educational institution, which was probably associated with a shrine. These seals are the first epigraphic evidence of the significance of Banaras as a centre of learning. The Chinese traveller Fa Huan alludes to this in his travel accounts of the sixth century BCE. In the evocative portrayal drawn up by Eck (1993:55), sages and *ṛsis* were well represented in the 'Forest of Bliss'. The importance of Banaras as an educational centre certainly grew during the Buddhist period but was in no sense restricted to those of Buddhist persuasion. There must have been Vedic schools and *mathas* where Brahmins and ascetics organised themselves in order to preserve and spread their rituals, beliefs and philosophies. The growth of Banaras as a *tīrtha* should therefore be considered as having been encouraged by the existence of a widespread network of educational institutions preserving Vedic and Brahmanic traditions.

The limited excavations on the Rajghat plateau nevertheless provide invaluable information concerning Banaras. They prove that the earliest settlements developed into a flourishing city on the plateau. They also reveal that, parallel with the decline in political power, there was an increase in economic prosperity. This in turn gave rise to an urban centre known for its trade and education in which new religious movements such as Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism and Buddhism flourished alongside the existing mode of worship. The seals revealing the existence of guilds suggest not only that the population was centred on the plateau but that there must have been settlements, some of considerable size, in what was called the 'Forest of Bliss' (Anandavana). However, except for Sherring (1975:291) no other scholar has addressed the obvious question: when and by whom was the Anandavana settled? It is clear from Sherring's findings that there were substantial Buddhist buildings in the Anandavana from an early period. These buildings, some of which were *vihāras*, must have contained a large population. The other major centre of Buddhist population was at Sarnath. In addition to the Buddhists in the Anandavana there must have been other ascetics, teachers and schools. It is also known, as we have seen above, that there were a number of guild-specific villages south of the Rajghat plateau. The growth of the *tīrthas* must have also encouraged further settlement but the main

¹⁴ It is generally believed that the majority of the religious seals was issued by a shrine and distributed among devotees.

shift in population was not to occur until the city on the Rajghat plateau was overthrown by the Muslims in 1194 CE.

While it may seem that this account of the early history of Banaras has little bearing on the later presence of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa in the city, the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* suggests otherwise. According to the mythology of this work, it is precisely the religious situation outlined in the account above that leads to Śiva sending Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa to Banaras. The early predominance of Buddhism in Banaras, it will be argued, is represented in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* by the rule of virtuous King Divodāsa. Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa is sent to Banaras by Śiva to remove Divodāsa, that is to say, the religious rule of Buddhism, after the failure of his previous emissaries. Only when Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa succeeds is Śiva able to return to his beloved city. This early history, at least in the eyes of authors of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, is the reason for the presence of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa within the city.

After the collapse of the Gupta empire, northern India came under the control of various Hindu kingdoms. The absence of any reference to the city in the political records of that early medieval period suggest that Banaras did not play a significant role in the politics of the area. A detailed description of Banaras is given by the Chinese pilgrim Huiyen Tsiang, however, who travelled through the city in the middle of the seventh century. This account provides more information about the city and its social life:

The kingdom of P'o-lo-ni-sse [Vārāṇasī, Banaras] is about four thousand *lis* [six hundred and seventy-seven miles] in circuit. To the west near the Ganges, is the capital, which is from eighteen to nineteen *lis* [three and a half miles] long, and from five to six *lis* [about one mile] broad. The villages lie very near together, and contain a numerous population. Families of very great wealth, whose houses are stored with rare and precious things are to be seen. The people are gentle and polished, and esteem most highly men given to study. The greater portion of them believe in the heretical doctrines and few revere the Law of the Buddha. The climate is temperate, grain is abundant, the fruit trees are luxuriant, and the earth is covered with tufted vegetation. There are thirty Buddhist monasteries, containing three thousand devotees, who all study the principles of the school Tching liang pou [the school of the Sammatīyas].

There are a hundred temples of the gods, and about ten thousand heretics, who, for the most part, worship the god Ta-Tseu-Thsai [Maheśvara]. Some cut off the hair, others reserve a tuft upon the crown of the head, go naked, and are destitute of any kind of clothing [the Nirgranthas]. Some besmear their bodies with ashes and zealously practise severe austerities, in order to obtain release from life and death.

In the capital there are twenty temples of the gods. Towers of many storeys are seen there; and magnificent chapels, constructed of stone, skilfully carved, and of rich painted wood. Umbrageous trees cover them with their shade and streams of clear water flow in all directions. The statue of the god in brass is little less than a hundred feet in height. Its aspect is grave and majestic; and, at the sight of it, one is filled with respectful awe, as if it were, indeed, alive.¹⁵

Huien Tsiang's account appears to separate the 'capital', by which he must mean the city on the Rajghat plateau, from the Anandavana which he says contains villages and a large population.¹⁶ He refers to thirty Buddhist monasteries but does not locate them, although it is reasonable to suppose that the majority were at Sarnath, with the remainder in the Anandavana itself. It is also clear from his account that Buddhism was, if anything, on the decline in Banaras and Śaivism in the ascendant. He numbers twenty temples in the capital, that is to say, on the Rajghat plateau, and no less than a hundred temples in the Anandavana. While he does not specify the size of these temples, and doubtless some must have been small shrines, he paints an overall picture of considerable development within the sacred area.

A century later Banaras was described by Pantha, a pilgrim who visited the city and established a Devī image there. The account of Pantha corresponds in many ways with the previous one: there are descriptions of the greenery in the city, the beauty of the women and the lively lanes. Pantha's observations contribute to the city's history for he is the first to describe the Devī cult. He states that he himself established an image of Bhavānī, called Caṇḍī. The image was a fierce Devī with a necklace of skulls, snakes hanging down from her throat and pieces of flesh on her axe. The visit of Pantha took place during the time when Tantrism rose to prominence, thus explaining the popularity of Bhavānī. Pantha's account also confirms that the city had become a place for devout Hindus to obtain *mokṣa* (Sahni in E.I. IX n°8:59-62; Eck 1993:80). In none of the materials relating to Banaras examined so far is there any mention of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa. This is unsurprising, however, when considered in the light of the evolution of the deity described in the next chapter.

For four consecutive centuries the city did not play any significant role in the political history of north India and power over Banaras changed hands continuously. From the death of Harṣa in 647 CE until the Pāla emperor Dharmapāla (770-810 CE) conquered vast parts of

¹⁵ Translated from the French of M. Stanislas Julien by Sherring (1975:366, appendix B). The same account also occurs in Beal (1963:44-45) and in Watters (1905:46-47).

¹⁶ In dealing with the early medieval period, Eck has restricted herself to a short paragraph. Instead of making the distinction between the capital city located on the Rajghat plateau and the rest of the area, she considers the description of the capital as the description of the Anandavana, since she later wonders whether the *deva* statue seen by Hsien Tsiang is Ādi Viśvanātha (1993:132). By considering the account of Hsien Tsiang as a reflection of the religious life in the Anandavana, however, she contradicts her earlier romantic vision in which she states that the Anandavana was a lush and green place, full of *āśramas* and hermitages (1993:29).

north India and established his rule in Kanauj, little is known. Whether or not Banaras was included in Dharmapāla's dominions is disputed for Altekar (1947) argues that Banaras was merely used as an encampment for the armies. Rāṣṭrakūṭa records reveal that Dharmapāla was defeated by the Pratihāra king, Vatsarāja, who ascended the throne in 778 CE. The victory of the Pratihāras marks the beginning of a triangular struggle between the Pratihāras¹⁷ in the north and west of India, the Rāṣṭrakūṭas in the Deccan and the Pālas in Bengal.¹⁸ Whereas the authority of Vatsarāja seems to have been limited to Rajputana for most of his reign, his son, Nāgabhaṭa II (809-833 CE),¹⁹ expanded the territory and established Kanauj as the capital of his domain. A struggle between the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, led by Govind III, and the Pratihāras, *circa* 809-810 CE resulted in a loss of territory which curbed the imperial ambitions of the Pratihāras for some time. However, with Bhoja the grandson of Nāgabhaṭa, ascending the throne a new era was ushered in²⁰. The epigraphic material for this period celebrates the victories of Bhoja over neighbouring enemies such as the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and the Pālas. In the west of the territory, however, he had to deal with the revolt of the Pratihāras of Jodhpur, a family branch who claimed independence.²¹ Bhoja managed to bring them under his authority again, though not for long.²² Because of the internal weaknesses of the Pālas and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, he was able to conquer virtually the whole of north India and his fame was known even to Arab historians.

Bhoja probably died around 885 CE and was succeeded by Mahendrapāla about whom little is known. Mahendrapāla had two sons, Bhoja II and Vināyakapāla, but the succession to the throne is not clear as there is some doubt whether Bhoja II ever ruled. One inscription states that a son, Mahīpāla, ruled between 914 and 917 CE; according to another inscription, Vināyakapāla ruled in 931 CE; and a third record names Kṣitipāla as the ruler (Majumdar 1964:33). Majumdar has argued that Vināyakapāla, Mahīpāla and Kṣitipāla are names for one ruler, who in addition to these three names was also known as Herambapāla. However, Ray (1928:230-234) argues that Bhoja II was also known as Mahīpāla and Kṣitipāla. The discussion concerning the names does not elucidate the succession of Mahendrapāla as there is

¹⁷ The Pratihāras were founded by the Brāhmaṇa Hariścandra in Rajputana and together with other Gurjāra clans they set up little principalities in Rajputana and Gujarat. For more details on the Pratihāras, see Majumdar (1964); Halder (1928); Jain (1943-1945); N. Ray (1928) and D. Sharma (1943-1944).

¹⁸ Although the struggle for power between the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, Pratihāras and Pālas might not seem to be directly related to the history of Banaras, it provides the historico-political background for a possible date for the Vināyaka group in Banaras.

¹⁹ The date for Nāgabhaṭa's ascension to the throne is disputed and unclear. In his article on the Gurjāra-Pratihāras, Majumdar gives 815 CE as the possible date but elsewhere (1964:27) he suggests that Nāgabhaṭa fought a war against the Rāṣṭrakūṭas in 809-810 CE which would lead one conclude that the actual reign of Nāgabhaṭa started before 809 CE.

²⁰ Nāgabhaṭa was succeeded by his son, Rāmabhadra, but his short reign of three years was unremarkable. His son Bhoja ascended the throne in 836 CE.

²¹ It was Kakkuka, the ruler of the Jodhpur branch of the Pratihāras, who established the Ghatiyala pillar in 861-862 CE on which there was an image of four Vināyakas. This pillar is referred to again in Chapter Two and in the Conclusion.

²² During the reign of Rāmabhadra, the Pratihāras of Jodhpur, who had long been under the authority of the Pratihāras of Kanauj, came into prominence and probably gained independence. One of the Jodhpur Pratihāras named Kakka accompanied Nāgabhaṭa II on his expedition against the Pālas of Bengal.

a considerable gap between the dates of the inscriptions of Bhoja (917 CE) and Vināyakapāla (931 CE).²³

A land-grant made by Vināyakapāla is of interest here because it shows that Banaras was part of the Pratihāra kingdom which stretched from Banaras in the east to Saurashtra in the west. In the grant Vināyakapāla makes a donation of a village outside Banaras to a Brahmin.²⁴ The name of this ruler indicates that by the tenth century CE Vināyaka must have acquired significant status amongst the gods, otherwise his name would not have been used by a king.²⁵ Apart from this land grant issued by Vināyakapāla, there is other evidence indicating that Banaras formed part of the vast Pratihāra kingdom. A ninth-century Pañca-Vināyaka panel found near the Lakṣmī *kuṇḍa* in Banaras is said to have come from a Pratihāra temple. Similarly, a tenth-century representation of the Pañca-Vināyakas found on a small replica temple is also dated to the Pratihāra period.

Although often overlooked, the art of the Gurjara-Pratihāras is one of the highlights of the post-Gupta period. Because little is known of the dynasty's early architecture and sculpture between 550 and 750 CE, it seems as if their art appeared fully developed (Huntington 1985:452). A study of their art which depicts a full-bodied and fleshy iconography, reveals that it provided a transition between post-Gupta and medieval dynastic art, combining the Gupta idioms of north India with the western Indian art of the Maitraka and other dynasties and the art of the Vākāṭakas in the Deccan (Trivedi 1989:3; Huntington 1985:452). Much of Pratihāra art and architecture was destroyed but numerous inscriptions indicate considerable patronage of temples.²⁶ The epigraphic record attests that not only kings but also people from other sections of society erected temples.²⁷ From around the middle of the eighth century, *pañcāyatana* temples

²³ Majumdar (1964:34) argues that the omission of Bhoja II in the 931 CE inscription could be the result of a common practice in which the king's descent is traced back in direct line only. However, from the articles by Hall and Fleet (see *infra*) it is known that Bhoja is mentioned in the grant, albeit as the brother of Vināyakapāla.

²⁴ The land grant of Vināyakapāla is described by Hall (1862:5) and Fleet (1886:138-141). Whereas Hall states that the village, Tikkatika, was situated on the other side of the Ganga, Fleet argues that there is no such place. However, two miles south of Banaras and on the same side of the river, there is a village called Tikree. The first lines of the landgrant state that the place of issue was Mahodaya (Kanauij). Thereafter follows a parental genealogy which mentions Mahendrapāladeva but also Bhojadeva, who is said to have been a worshipper of Viṣṇu. Vināyakapāla is said to be a worshipper of the Sun. Thereafter follows the content of the grant which is donated by Vināyakapāla to increase the merit of the religious activities of his parents.

²⁵ In this context it is interesting to note that a study of the name Gaṇapati in the Deccan has been conducted by Mulay (1972). He finds that the name of Gaṇapati as the title for a king did not occur before the eighth century. Rāṣṭrakūṭa records show two such names while a third name is Herambaka, which is also an epithet of Gaṇeśa. During the Yādava period (twelfth to thirteenth century) the number of Gaṇeśa epithets in names increased. In Gujarat, on the other hand, there is no record of a name with Gaṇeśa or Gaṇapati until the thirteenth century.

²⁶ Krishna (1989:32) states that the majority of inscriptions of the Pratihāras were made in order to record donations to temples, Brahmins and monasteries. The fact that the Pratihāra period was a period of relative peace may have contributed to their attention to art and religion.

²⁷ Krishna (1989:34-36) provides an overview of patrons engaged in temple building. Among them are some of the feudatories of the Pratihāra kings as well as merchants and Brahmins.

were constructed all over the Pratihāra empire,²⁸ suggesting the ecumenism of the Pratihāra rulers and the significance of the *pañcāyatana pūjā*.²⁹ The existence of these temples not only indicates that the *pūjā* was supported by the Pratihāra rulers, it also proves that Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa had gained such importance that he needed to be included.³⁰ The numerous statues of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa found in the Pratihāra period evidence the extent of his worship. The sculptures of Gaṇeśa can be classified in two groups: *āsana* (seated) and *nṛtya* (dancing) statues.³¹ Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa is one of the most frequently encountered gods, carved in the niches of the Pratihāra temples and in Śaivite temples occupying the traditional southern niche (Trivedi 1990:41). A survey of Pratihāra remains in Banaras is urgently needed and would undoubtedly reveal the considerable influence of the Pratihāras in the development of the city.

With the decline of Pratihāra power in the middle of the tenth century, the Kalacuris became the dominant dynasty in north India.³² They were known as ardent worshippers of Śiva, and various Kalacuri kings made very large donations to Śaivite *maṭhas* and sects. In the beginning of the eleventh century, Vikramāditya, also known as Gāṅgeyadeva, ascended the throne and he is said to have expanded the empire from his capital Prayag (Allahabad), where he died in 1041 CE. Vikramāditya's son Karṇadeva is said to have moved the capital from Prayag to Banaras where he constructed a temple known as the Karṇameru temple. The ruins of this temple have been excavated north of the Kāśī railway station (R. K. Sharma 1980:29).³³ Interestingly the only reference found to this temple is in the Kalacuri records (Hirarlal 1928:294).

Because the city of Banaras did not play an important role in the political history of the pre-Gāhaḍavāla period, its history is often portrayed as marginal to the general history of early medieval north India. As a result the evolution of the city as a major pilgrimage centre is often forgotten. It is known from literary and epigraphic sources that by the time the Gāhaḍavālas

²⁸ The *pañcāyatana* temples were constructed according to a standard plan with the central *garbha gr̥ha* surrounded by four subsidiary shrines. The Deogarh temple in which Durgā was the main deity is one of the earlier and simpler forms whereas the Hari-Hara temple in Osian is an example of an elaborate *pañcāyatana* temple (Huntington 1985:457-459).

²⁹ The origins of this *pūjā* are a subject for debate. Bühnemann (1988) and Kane (1968-74) are of the opinion that the *pūjā*, in which the five principal deities (Śiva, Viṣṇu, Devī, Sūrya and Gaṇeśa) are worshipped, originated long before the medieval period and was probably already widespread at the time of Śaṅkarācārya. Pathak (1987:58) on the other hand believes that the *pūjā* is a phenomenon of the eleventh century, but this is clearly wrong.

³⁰ Although the general pattern for the *pūjā* is Śiva, Viṣṇu, Devī, Sūrya and Gaṇeśa, there are some variations. Sometimes Gaṇeśa is replaced by Brahmā, thus indicating that some still believed that Brahmā was more important in the Hindu pantheon. Another variation is the replacement of Sūrya by Brahmā for the same reasons.

³¹ The number of dancing Vināyaka statues from the Pratihāra period reveals that they were particularly favoured. A dancing Gaṇeśa can have up to sixteen hands, although in the earlier phase of the art he was represented with only two or four hands (Krishna 1989:159-160).

³² The Kalacuris under the leadership of Kokkala I had earlier invaded Pratihāra territory but a deal seems to have been made in which it was agreed that the Kalacuris would no longer attack the Pratihāras (Ganguly 1964:87-92).

³³ For further information on this period see Hirarlal (1928), R. K. Sharma (1980) and R. C. Majumdar (1964:IV).

came into power in the beginning of the twelfth century, Banaras had become the most sacred pilgrimage place in India, attracting pilgrims from all corners of the subcontinent. In the seventh century Kāśī ranked third among the *tīrthas* of India, behind Prayag, which was called the Tīrtha Rāja, and Gaya, known for its sanctity concerning the *śrāddha* rituals. By the tenth century Banaras had taken over from Allahabad as the foremost *tīrtha* of India and was mainly known as the ideal place from which to obtain salvation after death.³⁴ Various Puranic sources describe the city's greatness as the Avimukta *kṣetra*, thereby indicating that there was a distinction between the centre of power located on the Rajghat plateau and the sacred territory known as Avimukta, Varanasi or Kāśī. The *Pātāla Khaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa* (Rocher 1986:207-210) as quoted in the *Tristhalīsetu* (verse one hundred) and the *Tīrthaprakāśa* (verse one hundred and seventy-five) describes the Varanasi *kṣetra* as having its middle point in Madhyameśvara, with a radius stretching to Dehalī Vināyaka in the west.³⁵ At the eastern border is the Ganga river. Another description of the *kṣetra* found in the *Matsya Purāṇa* (184:50-52) refers to the *kṣetra* being two and a half *yojanas* from east to west and half a *yojana* from north to south. It is also said that Varanasi extended as far as the dry rivulet of the Assi in the south. Another verse of the same Purāṇa (183:61-62) states that the *kṣetra* is only two *yojanas* in length, a reference which is taken up by the *Agni Purāṇa* (112:6). A version of the *Liṅga Purāṇa* (Purvārdha 92, 99-100) as quoted in the *Tristhalīsetu* (103) declares that the *kṣetra* is four *krośas* in the four directions and one *yojana* in extent. However, Kane states that there is no unanimity about the actual distance covered by a *yojana*. Quoting Rhys David (1968-74, volume III:145-146) he gives the approximate length as seven or eight miles to a *yojana*. These various sources indicate that the religious centre of Banaras, known as Kāśī, Avimukta or Varanasi, probably existed between the Assi and the Varana river and extended in the west up to Dehalī Vināyaka. This corresponds with the present sacred territory.³⁶ It should be noted, however, that today the Kāśī *kṣetra* is the largest whereas the Varanasi and the Avimukta *kṣetras* actually denote smaller areas.³⁷

The Muslim invasions of 1194 CE not only destroyed the city on the Rajghat plateau, it also had far reaching consequences for the Avimukta cult. Seals from the Rajghat plateau show that Avimukteśvara existed from as early as the fifth or sixth century, when he was worshipped

³⁴ In the introduction to the *Kṛtyakalpataru*, Aiyangar provides a short overview of the importance of Kāśī as a *tīrtha*. Although it only became famous as a major *tīrtha* in the seventh century, records of an earlier date mention Kāśī as a place for Vedic worship and pilgrimages. The author believes that the Purāṇas were written to promote the Śiva cult and that they contributed to the wider appeal of Kāśī. From the tenth century onwards, the city was glorified in south Indian works for its supremacy among the *tīrthas* (Aiyangar 1942:lxvi).

³⁵ Dehalī Vināyaka is situated on the outer circle of the Vināyakas and is considered the keeper of the western gate to the sacred city. In the time when the pilgrims came overland, Dehalī Vināyaka was the first deity to which the pilgrims had to pay homage.

³⁶ This sacred territory is the area encircled by the Pañcakrośī Yātrā, a pilgrimage circumambulating the sacred territory of Kāśī. Later in this thesis more details will be provided about this pilgrimage route which includes several of the fifty-six Vināyakas. A scholar who published a great number of articles and books on this *yātrā* is Rana P. B. Singh.

³⁷ For a full account of the present situation see Eck (1993:appendix II;350-357).

together with Pīṭhakeśvara.³⁸ Eight seals ranging from the fifth to the eleventh century indicate that his shrine must have existed for six hundred years. The *Jābāla Upaniṣad* describes Avimukta as situated between the Varana and the Assi (II:61, as in Olivelle 1992:142). The earliest epigraphic reference to his existence is found in the inscription of Pantha in the eighth century (E.I. IX:60) while the Amareśvara temple inscription of the eleventh century enumerates it as one of the five great *liṅgas*, the others being Kedāra, Omkāreśvara, Amareśvara and Mahākāla (Pathak 1957:173-174). The significance of this shrine is also shown by the fact that the Gāhaḍavālas issued grants after bathing in the Avimukta *tīrtha*. The reference in the *Jābāla Upaniṣad* supports the view that the Avimukta temple was actually situated in the sacred territory, between the Varana and the Assi. The question about its exact location remains unanswered however, for the central attraction of this verse is not the location of the Avimukta shrine but the denotation of Avimukta as the place where Śiva whispers the *śatarudrīya mantra* in the ears of the dying (Olivelle 1992:141-143).³⁹ In the sixth century *Daśakumāracarita* (Kale 1966:84), Arthapāla, having bathed in the Maṇikarṇikā *tīrtha*, goes to Kāśī where he worships Avimukta. This quotation places Avimukta in the vicinity of Maṇikarṇikā. The *Liṅga Purāṇa* quoted by Lakṣmīdhara mentions Avimukta as being situated north of the Jñāna Vāpī (*Kṛtyakalpataru, Tirthavivecana Khaṇḍa* pages 109-110).⁴⁰ These three sources suggest that Avimukta must have been somewhere in the neighbourhood of its present location in the Viśvanātha temple.

In seeking to identify the dynasty most likely to have been responsible for the grouping of the fifty-six Vināyakas, two candidates have so far declared themselves: the Pratihāras and the Kalacuris. To these two must now be added a third, the Gāhaḍavālas. In the Gāhaḍavāla period (1090-1194 CE), the city on the Rajghat plateau again became a centre of political power. The power vacuum caused by the deaths of Bhoja of the Paramāras and Kaṇḍadeva of the Kalacuris provided the opportunity for Candradeva to establish his sovereignty over north India (Niyogi 1959:18).⁴¹ Although there has been some discussion as to whether Candradeva belonged to the *varṇa* of the *kṣatriyas* (Ganguly 1933:952), evidence in the form of copper plates and inscriptions shows that he was a true leader and a protector of Hinduism (E.I. XIV:192; Sur 1929:92; Ray 1931:506). His son did not leave behind any inscriptions, thus

³⁸ In the Rajghat area seals of seven different gods and their temples are found. Pīṭhakeśvara is the earliest, going back to the fifth century CE when he was depicted together with Avimukteśvara. From this representation it can be deduced that their shrines were combined and that Pīṭhakeśvara was the most important of the two. After the Gupta period, however, this deity lost prestige and Avimukta rose to prominence. Pathak (1957:171-172) believes that a reference to a Pīṭhakeśvara *liṅga* in the *Liṅga Purāṇa* as quoted by Lakṣmīdhara supports the connection between the two.

³⁹ The *śatarudrīya* is a hymn containing the hundred names of Rudra, upon hearing which the dying person achieves salvation (Olivelle 1992:143).

⁴⁰ It is mentioned that south of Avimukteśvara there is a sacred *vāpī* (well). It is said that if someone drinks this water, three *liṅgas* will spring up in his heart (Sukul 1973:135).

⁴¹ In the only existing monograph on the Gāhaḍavāla dynasty Roma Niyogi has utilised the inscriptions in stone and on copper plates published in *Epigraphica Indica*.

leading some scholars to conclude that he was little more than a nominal ruler (Vaidya 1979:213-214). The most glorious of the Gāhaḍavāla dynasty was the third in the line, Govindacandra (1114-1155 CE), who is said to have sent his elephants 'in the three directions' (Vaidya 1979:211-212) and who was referred to as the conqueror of 'the three kingdoms'. However, it is difficult to establish which kingdoms are being referred to. Besides being a brilliant statesman, Govindacandra also acquired the title *sarvavidyāvicāravācaspati* or 'spokesman for the reflection upon all knowledge' (Niyogi 1959:230). Under his reign, his prime minister, Lakṣmīdhara, composed the *Vyavahāra Kṛtyakalpataru*, a large treatise on *dharma*, which is still considered a masterpiece among the Dharmasāstras. The forty-two grants which were issued during Govindacandra's reign form an invaluable source of information about the holy city. Although the capital of the Gāhaḍavālas was situated on the Rajghat plateau, the various locations mentioned in the grants refer to *tīrthas* in the south of the capital and on the site of the present Banaras. The majority of the inscriptions issued in this time shows a preference towards Vaiṣṇavism, although Śaivism and Sun worship are also represented.

The son of Govindacandra, Vijayacandra (1155-1169 CE), lived most of his life in his father's shadow and not much is known of him today except that he appears to have been succesful in warding off Muslim attacks (Majumdar 1962 volume V:54; H. C. Ray 1931:536). He was succeeded by his son, Jayacandra (1170-1193 CE). At that time the kingdom included the Gaya district, the Doab and Banaras, Allahabad and Patna (Ray 1931:541). Around 1180 CE the Gāhaḍavālas came into conflict with the Sena dynasty who expanded their territory towards the west. The Senas claim to have conquered Banaras but this cannot be verified. By the year 1186 CE the political situation in the north of India had changed; the Yaminī dynasty, long considered a buffer against Muslim attacks, had been conquered and the eastern Punjab was open to Muslim invaders. In 1191 CE the Karnal region came under attack and the Cāhamānas lost their kingdom. After conquering Delhi, Mu'izzu'd-Dīn Muḥammad Ghūrī advanced towards Banaras. In the year 1193 CE both armies met in a fierce battle and Jayacandra was killed. Allegedly his head was presented to Muḥammad Ghūrī. Thereafter the Muslims proceeded to Banaras which they sacked completely.

It has been mentioned that Govindacandra fought the Muslims. Some scholars have argued that it was merely raiding parties he dealt with,⁴² whereas others believe he encountered the Muslims in his campaigns towards the west of the country. One Muslim account describes the attack of Malik Afzal Alavi (Motichand 1985:117, Sukul 1974:4) on Banaras in which the

⁴² The most important political achievement of Govindacandra is the fact that he fought battles against the Muslims and won. Proof of his victory is attested in several inscriptions. Motichand, however, rightly questions the size of these Muslim attacks, as there is no record of them in the Muslim chronicles. He believes that they were mere raids (Motichand 1985:116).

army did not get further than the present Kāśī railway station. After this attack a group of Muslims allegedly settled in an area which is still called Alavipura and is in the north of the present city. The story relates how these Muslims became loyal to the Gāhaḍavāla kings and established two settlements bearing the names of two kings, Madanpura, nowadays just south of the Daśāśvamedha area and Govindapura (Sukul 1974:4).

The Gāhaḍavāla period was a glorious era: whereas political power was firmly established on the Rajghat plateau, the southern part of Banaras confirmed its position as the first and foremost *tīrtha* of India. The Gāhaḍavāla rulers were ardent patrons of culture and religion, as is shown from their grants to Brahmins.⁴³ Although the majority of the grants were issued from villages around the capital, some of the inscriptions enable us to reconstruct the *tīrthas* in the Anandavana. The *tīrthas* of Varanasi which are mentioned are: Ādi Keśava, Kapāla Mocana *ghāt*, Vedeśvara situated in the Avimukta *kṣetra*, Kṛttivāsa, Lolārka and the Koṭi *tīrtha*. Available epigraphic material also indicates that the sacred place of the Avimukta *kṣetra* was never referred to as Kāśī, but as Avimukta or Varanasi. The *Tīrthavivecana Khaṇḍa* of the *Kṛtyakalpataru* by Lakṣmīdhara supports this since there is only one reference to Kāśī in the whole volume. The *Kṛtyakalpataru* of Lakṣmīdhara is conclusive proof of the Gāhaḍavālas' patronage of education and scholarship.

The years 1193 and 1194 CE mark a turning point in the history of north India as vast parts of this area were brought under Muslim control. For five centuries it would stay under their rule. The Muslim history of north India is well documented and need not be rehearsed here. The following description therefore puts the emphasis on the evolution of Banaras under consecutive Muslim governments. In the past too many historians have focused on the destruction of the religion and culture of Banaras, thereby ignoring the fact that during these five hundred years there were many periods in which Banaras flourished again as the main pilgrimage centre of India. In sketching the evolution of the city, attention will be paid to these periods of revival.

In describing the sack of Banaras in 1194 CE, the Muslim chronicles tell of the vast riches being hauled away from the capital on the Rajghat plateau by the armies of Quṭbu'd-Dīn Aibak (Elliot volume II:209; Niyogi 1959:193-194). It was during this raid that some of the major temples south of the capital were destroyed.⁴⁴ Although no source has described the destruction of the Avimukta temple, the sudden decline of Avimukteśvara after the first Muslim

⁴³ A detailed description of all the grants issued by the Gāhaḍavālas is given by Ray (1931).

⁴⁴ They include the Hindu temple at the Bakariya *kuṇḍa*, the Karmameru temple situated at the confluence of the Ganga and the Varana, a Viṣṇu temple which was converted later into the Aṛhaiya Kaṅgura mosque, the Kṛttivīśeśvara temple which became the Alaṅgiri mosque, a temple near the Cauk area now known as Caukhambha mosque and the Ādi Viśvanātha temple. Except for the Karmameru temple built by Karna of the Kalacuri dynasty in the eleventh century, all the other temples which were destroyed by the Muslims were in fact converted Buddhist structures, as shown by Sherring (1975:308-321).

raids suggest that his temple was also sacked. After the raid a governor called Shahād Jamālu'd-Dīn was left behind to govern the occupied area. He founded the present Jamālu'd-Dīn *mohalla* in the north of the present city. The effects of these raids must have been traumatic for the religious life of the city, and the Rajghat plateau and the area immediately south of the plateau were probably in ruins because people from those places must have fled and settled further south, along the *ghāṭs* and in the Cauk area. In the north of the city, Adampura and Chaitpura were already small Muslim settlements and new Muslim immigrants settled there. Three years after the first attack, Quṭbu'd-Dīn returned to sack the city a second time.

The successor of Quṭbu'd-Dīn, Iltutmish (1210-1236 CE), placed Banaras under the supervision of his vassals, the Ghulām Sultans, who allegedly constructed the Arhaiya Kaṅgura mosque (Motichand 1985:181). Despite the image of Iltutmish as an intolerant despot, Motichand finds evidence for a large donation by a Gujarati *seṭha* for the reconstruction of the Viśvanātha temple during this period (1985:182).⁴⁵ More evidence of a religious revival during these times is found in an inscription, now in a mosque in Jaunpur, dated 1296 CE. A fragment of the inscription reads that a Padmeśvara temple was constructed at the gate of the Viśvanātha temple, thus confirming that in 1296 CE there was a Viśvanātha temple (Pathak 1957:174; Führer 1969:59) but no information concerning its location is given. After the Ghulām rulers lost power over the city, Banaras fell into the hands of Ghiyāzu'd-Dīn Balban who ruled from 1266 CE to 1287 CE. Nothing is known about his rule, except that a certain Jalālu'd-Dīn Aḥmad was appointed as the *subedar* for the region, and he established a *mohalla* there in his own name. Until the year 1320 CE, the beginning of the Tughlūq dynasty, there are no sources for the political history of the city. The inscription of 1296 CE, however, suggests that during the reign of the Khaljis (1290 to 1320 CE) the city witnessed no remarkable upheaval. Apart from the construction of a Padmeśvara temple⁴⁶ and a new Viśvanātha temple, it has also been suggested that in 1302 CE (1359 *vikram samvat*) a Maṇikarṇeśvara temple was constructed in the Maṇikarṇikā *tīrtha*. The presence of these three Hindu shrines clearly indicates that the present Viśvanātha area was the main site for temple construction. The establishment of yet another Muslim *mohalla* indicates that Muslim settlement in the north of the city was further extended.

In the context of this study of the fifty-six Vināyakas and the reference to them in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, it is necessary to examine in some detail the question of the sudden disappearance of Avimukteśvara and the rise to power of Viśvanātha, for the entire *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* is a glorification of Śiva as Viśvanātha and his entourage. It should be noted here that

⁴⁵ The Gujarati *seṭha* called Vastupāla donated one *lakh* for the reconstruction of the Viśvanātha temple (*Prabandha Kośa*, volume I:132, as in Motichand 1985:182).

⁴⁶ Eck (1993:134) gives 1353 CE as the date for the construction of the Padmeśvara temple, but this is in fact the date in *vikram samvat*, thus placing the date at 1296 CE.

the position of Viśvanātha is also of importance for the later analysis of the fifty-six Vināyakas, and more specifically, the position of the most important Vināyaka, Ḍhuṇḍhirāja, who is currently stationed at the entrance of the alley leading to the Viśvanāth temple. Furthermore in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* (see *supra*) the position of this Ḍhuṇḍhi Vināyaka at the right hand of Viśvanātha is mentioned, thereby suggesting that Ḍhuṇḍhi Vināyaka's shrine is in the vicinity of Viśvanātha's *liṅga*. Seals excavated on the Rajghat plateau show that up to the twelfth century Avimukteśvara was the most important deity of Banaras (Pathak 1957:174). The question as to where this Avimukta shrine was situated has been discussed earlier and it can be assumed that, based on references in the *Daśakumāracarita* (Kale 1966:84) and the *Jābāla Upaniṣad* (II:61, as in Olivelle 1992:142), his temple was somewhere between the Assi and the Varana, probably in the vicinity of the Maṇikarnikā *tīrtha*. The prestige of Avimukta was further enhanced by the references in the twelfth-century treatise, *Kṛtyakalpataru*, and by the fact that in the same work Viśvanātha was no more than an ordinary *liṅga* (Aiyangar 1942:lxixiii).⁴⁷ There is evidence that the Viśvanātha temple was destroyed during the Muslim raids of 1194 CE and, although no sources describing the destruction of the Avimukteśvara *liṅga* are found, there is no doubt that this temple was also demolished, which could then be considered as the most likely explanation for the sudden decline of Avimukteśvara's status. The Jaunpur inscription of 1296 CE and the eulogy of Viśvanātha in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, which was probably composed somewhere between 1250 and 1350 CE, suggest the rise to prominence of the Viśvanātha *liṅga*.

Various scholars have discussed the exact location of this temple at length throughout the history of Banaras. Except for Altekar,⁴⁸ most agree that the Ādi Viśvanātha temple was originally situated at the place where the Raziyya'd-Dīn mosque stands today. As early as the *Tīrthavivecana Khaṇḍa*, the position of Viśvanātha is suggested by the verse: 'to the north-east of Viśveśvara is the Avadhūta *tīrtha*' (KKT:93). Sukul has pointed out that this *tīrtha* extended as far as the Lajpat Rai Road where the Raziyya mosque is situated. The Ādi Viśvanātha temple was knocked down by the armies of Qutbu'd-Dīn Aibak in 1194 CE and the ruins must have remained untouched because between 1236 and 1240 CE Raziyya'd-Dīn constructed her small mosque from the debris of the temple on that site. Although its destruction does not seem unusual in the context of the Muslim raids, the question needs to be asked why the shrine of an insignificant *liṅga* was singled out for destruction. This question is answered by Sherring, whose study of Buddhist remains in the city of Banaras reveals that a significant number of the early mosques were built from the ruins of Buddhist structures which, after the decline of Buddhism in the area, had been converted into Hindu temples. The Caukhamba mosque, for

⁴⁷ Of the three references to Viśveśvara, one is probably an interpolation, another one refers to Śiva as 'Lord of the Universe' and the third reference is to an ordinary *liṅga* (Aiyangar 1942:lxixiii).

⁴⁸ Altekar believes that the Ādi Viśvanātha temple stood somewhere else originally before being moved to its present location near the Raziyya mosque. The present Ādi Viśvanātha temple was constructed in the eighteenth century by a Rājput prince (Sukul 1970:718).

instance, shows four styles: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain and Muslim. In the case of the Ādi Viśvanātha mosque, Sherring argues that the original construction was probably a Buddhist monastery. The use of these Buddhist structures, most of them of considerable size, by Hindus provides the answer to why they were destroyed. Because of their size they attracted the attention of the Muslim soldiers who were primarily interested in looting. Supporting this theory is the existence of the Vṛddhakāleśvara temple which is the only surviving Hindu temple of the twelfth century and was not originally a Buddhist construction. Its small size and modest features did not attract the attention of the Muslims although it is situated near the Kṛttivāsa temple in the Matsyodari area.

The second half of the thirteenth to the first half of the fourteenth century was clearly a period of revival in Banaras. The Padmeśvara temple, which, according to the inscription, is built at the gate of the Viśvanātha temple (Führer 1969:59), shows that by 1296 CE a new Viśvanātha temple had been constructed with a large donation from a Gujarati *seṭha*. The exact location of this new Viśvanātha temple is not known but in the context of later reconstructions of the temple in the same area, it is likely that it was also rebuilt near the original site. The construction of the Maṇikarṇikeśvara temple (1302 CE)⁴⁹ further supports the theory that there was a period of tolerance. Although the date of the composition of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* will be discussed later it should be noted here that it was in this era of revival that the Māhātmya was most likely to have been written. By the fifteenth century the status of Viśvanātha was such that he had completely eclipsed Avimukta. Evidence of this is found in the *Tīrthacintāmaṇi* written by Vācaspati Miśra (TC:360; Aiyangar 1942). In his digest Miśra assumed that Avimukta and Viśvanātha were both different names for one and the same *liṅga*, as did Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa in the sixteenth century.

Despite a new wave of intolerance during the Tughluq reign,⁵⁰ the *Vividhatīrtha*, a work of the Jain *ācārya* Jinaprabha Surī, provides further information about the topography of the city (Vijaya Jina 1931; Motichand 1985:186). Jinaprabha Surī visited the city in the first half of the fourteenth century.⁵¹ According to him the city was divided into four parts: Deva Banaras, Rajdhani Banaras, Madan Banaras and Vijaya Banaras. Although the text does not provide any detailed information as to where these four divisions were situated, the text states that Deva Banaras was located around the Viśvanātha *mandir*. Rajdhani Banaras probably indicated the area which was considered the centre of the Muslim rulers, thus definitely including Adampura and Chaitpura (also written as Jaitpura). The third part is called Madanpura. Motichand argues

⁴⁹ The construction of the Maṇikarṇikeśvara temple corresponds with the reign of Allāh-'ud Dīn Khaljī.

⁵⁰ Firoze Shāh Tughluq, the third sultan, converted the ruins of the Hindu temple at the Bakariya *kuṇḍa* into a nondescript mosque (Motichand 1985:187), thus demonstrating to the Hindu population his religious zeal. This event allegedly took place in 1376 CE.

⁵¹ No definite date has been established for the visit of Jinaprabha Sūrī. However it is known that he wrote this work during the reign of Muḥammad Tughlūq who ruled from 1325 to 1351 CE (Frédéric 1987; Motichand 1985:185).

that it is unlikely that the Madanpura mentioned here is the present *mohalla* and believes it could be a reference to an area outside the city, namely Ghazipur. When, in the sixteenth century, Bābur set up camp outside Ghazipur he referred to this place as Madan Varanasi (Motichand 1985:186). Locating the fourth area, Vijaya Banaras, is another problem. Because Mirzapur at that time was also called Vijayagarh, Motichand considers this as a possibility. Motichand's argument concerning Madanpura and Vijayapura is unconvincing. The cities of Ghazipur and Mirzapur are respectively about seventy and sixty kilometres away from Banaras, which means that Jinaprabha Sūri was describing a very large area. The inclusion of Ghazipur and Mirzapur in his account seems implausible because these two cities were of no importance for the Jains whereas Banaras was. It therefore seems more plausible to take Madanpura as referring to the present Madanpura *mohalla* which even in the fourteenth century had been inhabited by Muslims for two centuries.

The location of Vijayapura remains unknown. Did it indicate another part of the city conquered by the Muslims, as the word *vijaya* suggests, or should *vijaya* here be interpreted from the standpoint of Jainism, thus indicating an area which was important for the Jain community? Clearly the city of Banaras had some importance for Jains because, according to the Jain Śrutis, the seventh and the thirteenth Jinās were born there and Jinaprabha Sūrī refers to the Pārśvanātha temple, a Jain shrine, although he gives no location for it. A Jain temple with the same name is today situated in Bhelupura. This Pārśvanātha temple is also mentioned by the Jain merchant Banārsīdās in his biography, *Ardhakathā*,⁵² written in 1641 CE, but there is no evidence that the temples are one and the same. It could be that the temple mentioned in the fourteenth century was later destroyed and reconstructed by the time Banārsīdās visited the shrine. If the temple was located in what is now the Bhelupura area it is possible that, because of its location, the temple was never touched by the Muslim armies. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that Vijaya Banaras was a reference to the present Bhelupura area.⁵³ The text of Jinaprabha Sūrī is thus a valuable indicator of the city environs in the early fourteenth century. There were large Muslim communities living in the north of the city, in the present areas of Adamapura and Jaitpura and also south of the Dasasvamedha area in Madanpura. Although the extent of Deva Banaras is not precisely known there is reason to believe that it stretched along the Ganga from Trilocana to Daśāśvamedha *ghāṭ* and inwards as far as the Cauk area. The fourth part, Vijaya Varanasi, was possibly the present Bhelupura area.⁵⁴

⁵² *Ardhakathā* or 'Half a Tale' is the only known biographical work in Hindi from the Mughal period. It was written by the Jain merchant Banārsīdās when he was fifty-five years old, in 1641, the heyday of the Mughal empire. The author's vivid accounts paint a picture of daily life in the time of the Mughals. Despite his name, Banārsīdās did not live in Banaras and he visited the city only once (Mukund Lath 1981).

⁵³ In 1831 when Prinsep conducted a survey of the number of temples in the different *mohallas*, one hundred and fifty-four temples were counted for the Bhelupura area, making it the third largest area for temples in the city (B. Verma 1935:44).

⁵⁴ Although not strictly relevant, it is interesting that the palace of the Mahārāja of Banaras in Bhelupura is called Vijayanagar Bhavan.

During Tughluq rule, the small independent Sharqī dynasty gained control over the Banaras and the Jaunpur area. Although they are described by Eck as iconoclastic, there is some evidence of their tolerance towards Hindus (Sa'eed 1972:195). The last Sharqī ruler was defeated by Buhlūl of the Lodi dynasty who brought the territory again under the authority of the Delhi Sultanate. Sikander Lodi, the eldest son of Buhlūl, declared himself ruler over the Banaras area by dethroning his brother. He raided the city and its temples and it is said that after his raids no temple stood erect (Motichand 1985:188). Given the turbulence of the years of the Delhi Sultanate it is possible that Muslim social and religious attitudes were a significant factor in the rise of *nirguṇa* religion among the lower castes.

The battle of Pānīpat in 1526 CE marked the beginning of the Mughal period in India. In the first years of their rule, Bābur, the first Mughal, gradually conquered the north of India. In 1529 he marched to Banaras and to Cunar where there is a fort occupying a strategic position over the Ganga. Because of the strategic position of Banaras on the river Bābur made the city an important commercial centre. Humāyūn, Bābur's successor, could not maintain the vast legacy of his father and the territory was under constant attack. During this period Sher Khān, an Afghan ruler, descended on the region and took hold of the fort at Cunar but he never set foot in Banaras itself. In 1556 CE Akbar ascended the Mughal throne. Having conquered most of north India, he then focused on the welfare of his subjects and opened up the vast Mughal administration to Hindus. Many of his generals were recruited from the ranks of the Rājputs.

Although the Mughal period is well documented, little is known about religious life in Banaras. Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa who lived through most of the sixteenth century provides an account of a city in ruins. However, the very fact that Banaras was chosen as a significant commercial centre suggests that the city flourished at least on an economic level. In the *Tristhalīsetu* (verse two hundred and eight) Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa comments on the situation of religious life at the beginning of the sixteenth century. One passage states that even if the Viśvanātha *liṅga* is taken away, the place where it used to be should be worshipped, thus indicating that in the lifetime of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa the Viśvanātha temple was not only destroyed, but the *liṅga* was also removed.⁵⁵ This comment reflects the situation of the late fourteenth and fifteenth century. The Lodis had left the city in ruins and the policy of religious intolerance was maintained under the first two rulers of the Mughal dynasty, Bābur and Humāyūn. There is evidence, however, in the writings of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, that there was a period of revival in the middle of the sixteenth century (T. P. Verma 1984:200; Eck 1993:134). For most of his life Bhaṭṭa experienced the

⁵⁵ 'Even if the *liṅga* of Viśveśvara here is taken off somewhere and another is brought in and established by human hands, on the account of the difficulty of the times, whatever is established in that place should be worshipped...And if, owing to the power of foreign rulers, there is no *liṅga* at all in that place, even so, the *dharma* of that place itself should be observed, with the rites of circumambulation, salutation etc., and in this way the daily pilgrimage shall be performed' (Eck 1993:134, quoting from the *Tristhalīsetu*).

hardships of being a Brahmin living under Muslim domination but towards the end of his life the revival period began. It is said that Bhaṭṭa actually persuaded the Hindu general Ṭodar Mal to reconstruct the Viśvanātha temple around the year 1585 CE although some scholars believe that it was Ṭodar Mal's son Gobardan who reconstructed the temple (Motichand 1985:193; Vyās 1987:289-290). The new Viśvanātha temple was constructed on yet another site, but nearby the old site. It was a huge building consisting of a *garbha gṛha* surrounded by eight pavilions (T. P. Verma 1984:201). and was built on the spot where the Aurangzeb mosque is presently situated near to the Jñāna Vāpī. Akbar's reign was a period of prosperity which not only witnessed the reconstruction of the Viśvanātha temple, but also saw the construction of many other religious shrines. In 1589 CE the Draupadī *kūpa* (located in the Śivapura area) was constructed by Govind Dās on the order of Akbar. Following Ṭodar Mal's example, other Rājput generals and vassals financed the construction of buildings or *ghāṭs*. Rāja Mān Singh from Jaipur laid the foundation for Mān Mandir *ghāṭ* and for the palace at the top of the *ghāṭ*. Today this palace is one of the few pre-Aurangzeb buildings remaining. In 1611 CE the Rāja of Bundi, Surjana Singh, built a palace and a *ghāṭ*. Construction in a climate of religious tolerance continued under the rule of Akbar's son Jahāngīr.⁵⁶ In 1627 CE the Jñāna Vāpī well was restored by the queen of Gwalior, Baijā Baie (R. P. B. Singh 1993:311; Motichand 1985:197).

Both Eck and Motichand refer to the accounts of some of the European travellers who passed through Banaras during their stay in India. These descriptions through western eyes provide us with a broader view of the religious life and topography of the city. The first account is by a British traveller, Ralph Fitch, who described life on the *ghāṭs* at dawn. From the description given by Fitch it is clear that the stone *ghāṭs* were not yet constructed whereas the Muslims lived in well-made quarters outside the city, thus suggesting that the Muslim neighbourhoods were not within the sacred Hindu area. Considering the division of Banaras given by Jinaprabha Sūri, the reference to 'the outside of the city' probably indicates the north of the city, earlier called 'Rajdhani Banaras' (Motichand 1985:201; Eck 1993:10-11). It is interesting that Fitch, travelling in 1584 CE, does not mention any important large temple or shrine, thus suggesting that at the time of his journey the city still lay in ruins.

Akbar's grandson, Shāh Jahān, ignored the policy of tolerance of his father and grandfather and opted for strict Muslim rule. Eck remarks that he gave the order to demolish no less than seventy-six newly constructed temples in Banaras (1993:83). Motichand adds to this that when the emperor learnt that not all were destroyed he went over to the city and personally saw that all were 'properly' demolished (Motichand 1985:209). However, the construction of the Piśācamocana *kuṇḍa* by Gopal Shāhu in 1630 CE indicates that the wave of terror did not

⁵⁶ In the history of the rule of Jahangir, the name of Banaras was mentioned only once, thus indicating that the city was of no importance to the emperor and that the holy centre of the Hindus was not considered to be a threat to Islam (Motichand 1985:198).

hit Banaras in the first years of Shāh Jahān's reign. There is also some confusion with regard to the demolition of the seventy-six temples attributed to Shāh Jahān. Shāh Jahān's son, Aurangzeb, was even more zealous than his father, and he is credited with the demolition of the city's greatest temples such as the Viśvanātha temple, the Kṛttivāsa and the Bindu Mādhava temple. It is difficult to understand how these three very important temples could still be left standing for Aurangzeb to destroy if the story about Shāh Jahān is accurate. It could be that the story concerning Shāh Jahān was exaggerated⁵⁷ or that the authors of the Muslim chronicles were indulging in competitive iconoclasm.

Invaluable for the reconstruction of the topography of the city in the beginning of the seventeenth century is the work of Varadarāja (who is dated between 1600 and 1660 CE) entitled *Gīrvāṇa pada mañjari* (Gode 1941:193; Motichand 1985:202-203). The text, a record of the life of Bhaṭṭoji, lists some of the *ghāṭs* and *mohallas* of Banaras. Bhaṭṭoji is said to have had a house on Kedāra *ghāṭ*. Further in the text Varadarāja refers to other houses of Brahmins but Gode suggests that it is possible that the names of the Brahmins are fictitious and merely provide the excuse to list the different quarters in the city.⁵⁸ This work describes some interesting features of the city in the early seventeenth century, particularly from the point of view of the present study of Vināyakas in the city. Starting from the north and going towards the south of the city, it seems that there was a *ghāṭ* called Siddhi Vināyaka *ghāṭ*, thus indicating that this Vināyaka had acquired a considerable reputation, especially given that the famous Maṇikarṇikā *ghāṭ* is nowhere mentioned. The text also mentions the name of 'Dugdha Vināyaka' as the name of one of the *mohallas*, thus providing evidence that in the seventeenth century Dūdh Vināyaka had acquired enough status for a whole *mohalla* to be named after him.

Apart from the text of Varadarāja, there are also the travel accounts of the French travellers Tavernier and Bernier who visited the city together in 1665. They write of the religious life of Banaras in the middle of the seventeenth century.⁵⁹ While Bernier mainly wrote about the intellectual life in the city, Tavernier gives a picture of life along the river and the

⁵⁷ A counter-indication of religious tolerance during the reign of Shah Jahan is provided by Rana P. B. Singh who argues that the Venī Mādhava temple was restored in 1642 CE (1992:311).

⁵⁸ The following places are referred to in the text: Rājghaṭṭa, Trilocana, Brahmā, Durgā, Bindumādhava, Maṅgalāgaurī, Rāma, Agniśvara, Nageśvara, Vireśvara, Siddhi Vināyaka *ghaṭṭa*, Svargadvāra *pradeśa*, Mokśadvāra *pradeśa*, Gaṅgākeśavapaśvā, Jarāsaṅgha, Vṛddhāditya, Someśvara, Rāmeśvara, Lolārka, Assī *saṅga*, Varuṇa *saṅga*, Lakṣmī *saṅga* on Bindumādhava *ghāṭ*, Gaṅgeśvara on Bindumādhava *ghāṭ*, Ādikeśaveśvara on Bindumādhava *ghāṭ*, Dakṣeśvara, Dugdha Vināyaka, Kāla Bhairava, Daśāśvamedha Catuṣṭi Yoginī *ghāṭ*, Sarveśvara *ghāṭ*, Mansaroveśvara, Ādi Viśvanātheśvara, Kedareśvara (Gode 1941:1931 Umakanth Shah (J.O.I.B, parts 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7)). Motichand provides more information on the present location of the sites and mentions that the Ādi Viśvanātha temple which is referred to is the Viśvanātha temple of Rājmandir *ghāṭ* situated on Bindumādhava *ghāṭ*. However, Motichand does not give any reference and no Rājmandir was found in other works dealing with the *ghāṭs* or the temples of Banaras (Motichand 1985:202-203).

⁵⁹ Rana P. B. Singh, however, states that Tavernier visited the city around 1650 CE and that the visit of Bernier was in 1660 CE (1993:311). Motichand dates the visit of Tavernier to 1665 CE while Bernier would have visited the city in 1660 CE. However, a footnote in the book by Bernier indicates that both men were together in Banaras in 1665, on the eleventh to the thirteenth of December (Bernier 1891:341).

'great pagoda'. The 'pagoda' mentioned by Tavernier is the Bindumādhava temple as is clear from the account in which Bindumādhava is referred to as 'Bainmadou' having 'Garou' as his vehicle.⁶⁰ Besides the great temple, Tavernier also describes a college adjoining the temple and erected by Rāja Jai Singh (of Jaipur). On the other side of the street in which the college is situated was another pagoda for the god 'Richourdas' who had a brother called 'Gopaldas' (Ball 1889 volume II:237). Who exactly Richourdas and Gopaldas were remains a mystery. Gopaldas could be a reference to Kṛṣṇa. Tavernier also describes a pillar situated in a Muslim graveyard in the north-west of the city, probably the Lāt Bhairava pillar (Ball 1889 volume I:119; Eck 1993:196-197). Both the accounts of Bernier and Tavernier suggest that, despite the policy of intolerance attributed to Shāh Jahān, life in the holy city did not seem to be much disturbed and intellectual activity continued. From the work of Varadarāja and Tavernier it can be concluded that the river front up to Kedāra *ghāt* was well-developed. Although none of the stone *ghāṭs* had been constructed, some of the princes, all vassals of the Mughals, had built palaces and had made provisions for pilgrims from their region. The present situation, in which some *ghāṭs* are connected with immigrants from specific places, probably originated at this time.

The reign of Aurangzeb (1659-1707 CE) is generally considered to be the most destructive period in the history of the holy city. Eck (1993:84) even states that: 'There is no major religious sanctuary in all Banaras that predates the time of Aurangzeb in the seventeenth century'. However, from the writings of Bernier and Tavernier it is quite clear that the wave of destruction did not set in until a later period of Aurangzeb's reign. The main reason may have been that early in his reign he was preoccupied with the rebellious activities of the Marāṭhas in the Deccan. During the early period of his reign it seems that the Kṛttivāsa temple, situated near the present Alamgiri mosque, was reconstructed and, also in Banaras, Dāra Śukoh made use of the assistance of *paṇḍits* from Banaras to translate some of the Upaniṣads (K. Verma 1992:14-15). They also assisted him in a work on the temples of Banaras which, according to Verma, was later used by Aurangzeb as the guide for which temples had to be destroyed. Even under Aurangzeb's government, the Rājput aristocracy played an important role in the religious life of Banaras as shown from an account about Maharāṇā Rājasingh, who in 1665 CE performed an elaborate *pūjā* in the Viśvanātha temple (Verma 1992).

⁶⁰ 'The building is in the form of a cross, like all other pagodas, having its four arms equal. In the middle a lofty dome rises like a kind of tower with many sides, which terminates in a point, and at the end of each arm of the cross another tower rises, which can be ascended from outside. Before reaching the top you meet several balconies and many niches, which project to intercept the fresh air; and all over the tower there are figures in relief of the various kinds of animals, which are rudely executed. Under this great dome, and exactly in the middle of the pagoda, there is an altar like a kind of table, of seven to eight feet in length and five to six feet wide, with two steps in the front, which serve as a footstool' (Ball 1889 II:232). Ball, editing the book of Tavernier, explains that 'Bainmadou' must be a reference to 'Bhim Mahadeva', a combination of names for Śiva (1889:232, footnote 1) while 'Garou' possibly stood for 'gau' or 'cow' (1889:233 footnote 1). However, it is more likely that 'Bainmadou' is a reference to Bindumādhava, whose temple was at the *ghāt*.

When the armies of Aurangzeb invaded the city, they destroyed some of the most important temples: Kṛttivāsa, Oṃkāra, Mahādeva, Madhyameśvara, Viśveśvara, Bindu Mādhava and Kāla Bhairava between the years 1669 and 1673 CE. As Eck (1993:84) rightly suggests, 'some of them never recovered, like the Kṛttivāsa temple, others went into hiding, like the guardian deity Kāla Bhairava. Likewise, the Viṣṇu image of Bindumādhava, whose site was usurped by a huge mosque, was moved to a nearby house'. Although Eck is correct regarding the scale of the destruction which took place under Aurangzeb, Sen (1912:269-273) has argued that it was Aurangzeb who issued a directive that the Brahmins should not be harassed and that their places of worship should not be interfered with. Bayly (1981:163) has argued that cities like Banaras and Gaya probably benefited from the political unification of the Mughal empire in the sense that it provided the pilgrims with safe travel.⁶¹ An example which certainly supports this argument is the biography of Banārsīdās, in which the author, a Jain merchant, describes his many journeys through the north of India (Mukund Lath 1981). The list of temples demolished by the Muslims in the seventeenth century enables a reconstruction of the topography of the main city in that era. It is noteworthy that not one of the temples was situated south of Viśvanātha, thus suggesting that the religious centre of the city was then mainly around the present Cauk area.

The modern history of Banaras, from the demise of the Mughal empire to the present day, has been thoroughly examined by a number of scholars from a variety of viewpoints. Notable amongst these are Bayly (1993), Cohn (1960, 1962 and 1987), Freitag (1989), Lutgendorf (1991), Mishra (1975), Kumar (1988) and Parry (1994): to attempt to summarise their findings here would be redundant. The city itself witnessed the same revival, reconstruction and even re-invention that occurred in most of north India. In particular, people with new found wealth sought outlets for patronage, both as a means of religious expression and also as legitimisation and valorisation. The remainder of this chapter will now concentrate on the consequences of this patronage.

For centuries the Maharashtrians had maintained extensive links with Banaras. Although Altekar's statement that modern Banaras is largely the creation of the Marāṭhas is certainly exaggerated, it does contain some truth, because, with the decline of Mughal power, the Marāṭhas were amongst the first to attempt to revive the religious life of the holy city. They were the main financiers of the construction of *ghāṭs* along the river front (Bayly 1993:137; Freitag 1992:5; K. P. Mishra 1975:introduction; Motichand 1985:277 and following)⁶² and they were the first to construct *dharmaśālās* for pilgrims (Qanungo 1960:122). In 1807 the

⁶¹ Bayly (1981:163) argues that the Moghul empire had a direct interest in the promotion of mobility between the various regions of India as it derived a substantial revenue from trade and came to levy a charge on the pilgrims attending the ritual centres.

⁶² For a detailed survey of all the *ghāṭs* of Banaras, see Harishankar's *Kāśī ke Ghāṭ* which provides a survey of all the *ghāṭs* and their history.

Peśvā Amṛt Rao commissioned the building of Rāja *ghāṭ*, the most southerly of the *ghāṭs* constructed by the Marāṭhas. In 1812 a minister of the Rāja of Nagpur constructed the Darbhaṅga *ghāṭ* and the palace adjacent to it. In the same year he commissioned the construction of the adjoining Munshi *ghāṭ*. North of Munshi *ghāṭ* is Ahilya *ghāṭ* constructed on the orders of Ahilya, the queen of Holkar in 1785.⁶³ Queen Ahilya Bhai, together with the rulers of Indore, helped finance the construction of Śītalā *ghāṭ*. Because of its sanctity, Daśāśvamedha *ghāṭ* was one of the earliest *ghāṭs* to be rendered in stone. The work was started in 1735 by Bājīrao Peśvā who also arranged for the embellishment of the main cremation *ghāṭ* in 1730. Bhoṁsla *ghāṭ* was constructed in 1795 on the orders of the Mahārāja of Bhoṁsla. In this period the Marāṭhi community also constructed what is today one of their most important temples, the Gaṇeśa temple, which houses the statue of the coral Gaṇeśa, at Gaṇeśa *ghāṭ*, formerly known as Agnīśvara *ghāṭ* (Sheshadri 1925:35). Slightly further to the north is Trilocana *ghāṭ*, one of the five most sacred *ghāṭs* of Banaras, which was rendered in stone in 1740 by Nārāyaṇa Dikṣit (Harishankar 1996:37-87; R. P. B. Singh 1993:67-101). The Peśvās also financed the construction of many temples within the city itself of which the Baḍe Gaṇeśa temple in the Kabīrcaura is one (Newell 1916:8; Parker 1895:26). They were also responsible for the construction of the important shrine of Sākṣī Vināyaka. It was Queen Ahilya of Holkar who in 1777 sponsored the construction of the present Viśvanātha temple, situated beside the site of the demolished mosque (K. Verma 1992:23-24; Eck 1993:120).

In addition to the Marāṭhas there were other princely states and royal families who took a keen interest in the reconstruction of the holy city. One Rājput princess who proved to be an enthusiastic sponsor was the Bengālī Rāṇī Bhavānī, who lived in Banaras between 1756 and 1758. She allegedly gave orders for the construction of more than two hundred buildings. It was she who constructed the shrines and the *dharmaśālās* along the Pañcakrośī route (R. Bhattacharya 1980). During her stay in the city the *mohalla* which is now called the Bengālī Ṭola became the primary area of Bengālī settlement. It was in this *ṭola* that Rāṇī Bhavānī commissioned the construction of several Devī temples. She also constructed the Nīlakaṇṭheśvara temple where a statue of a Pañcamukha Vināyaka is installed.

The story of the rise of the Bhumihar Rājas of Banaras is well known. The dynasty began in 1739 when Balwant Singh, son of Mansa Rāma, received a certificate for the kingship over the Banaras area from Muḥammad Shāh, the king of Delhi. Notwithstanding the fact that the rājās of India lost their power after Independence, the Rājā of Banaras is still an important figure in the social life of the city. Throughout the centuries the dynasty positioned itself as the protector of Hindu religion and culture. When the East India Company gained political control over the city of Banaras in 1764, the rājās became nominal and ceremonial kings who

⁶³ Before it was made *pakkā* by the queen of Holkar this *ghāṭ* was known as Kevalgiri *ghāṭ*.

concentrated their activities on patronising the cultural and religious life of the city. The many aspects of their patronage have been described by Freitag (1992) and Lutgendorf (1987). The dynasty was responsible for the construction of many of the *ghāṭs* in the southern part of the city. Amongst these are Chet Singh *ghāṭ*, Śivala *ghāṭ* and Nirañjani *ghāṭ*, all of them embellished with a fortress or palace located at the top of the *ghāṭ*. They were also responsible for the construction of the Rāmnagar fort and the adjacent Durgā temple (Harishankar 1996:44-45).

The settlement patterns of the various regional groupings are clearer from the eighteenth century onwards. In general it seems that the earliest immigrants have their *mohallas* to the north of the city. The Maharashtrians, one of the earliest regional groups to settle in the city, are concentrated around the Brahmā-Bhoṁsla *ghāṭ* area. The *mohalla* of the Gujaratis and the Nepalis is in the area around Dūdh Vināyaka. The area around Scindhia *ghāṭ* became a settlement for immigrants from Madhya Pradesh. South of Daśāśvamedha *ghāṭ* is the Madanpura *mohalla* with its large Muslim population and south of that is the Bengali Ṭola which was populated from the eighteenth century. The primary area of settlement for immigrants from the south of India is around Kedār *ghāṭ*. The Viśvanātha area, now called Kotwālpura, which eventually leads to the Cauk, has a very mixed population with a high percentage of Muslims living towards the western side of this area. The north of the city, Ādampura and Jaitpura, are mainly Muslim areas and have been for centuries. The British built their residences in the north-west, outside the city in what is called 'Civil Lines'. They contributed to the landscape of the city by constructing the considerable government buildings and by installing a closed drainage system in the main streets and lanes, which resulted in the elevation of the centre of the city.

Another important contribution of the British to the history of Banaras are the beautiful sketches and paintings of Thomas and William Daniel and James Prinsep. Prinsep, who spent several years in the city, produced a map of the entire city in 1822 showing the maze of lanes and alleys for which Banaras is famous. From this map it is clear that by that time the city had established its present overall shape, with the greatest concentration of citizens living in the northern part of the city. The density of population decreases towards the south. A second map prepared by Prinsep is particularly valuable since it shows all the different *nālas*, *kuṇḍas* and *tālābs*, many of which have now disappeared. In addition to mapping and sketching the city, Prinsep also conducted a temple count in 1831 CE. Out of one thousand four hundred and three temples, six hundred and nineteen were in the Daśāśvamedha area alone, two hundred and sixteen were in the Kotvāli *mohalla*, the Kālabhairava area counted two hundred and sixteen temples and the Bhelupura area one hundred and fifty-four. The lowest concentration of temples was in the traditional Muslim neighbourhoods: Adampura forty-eight, Jaitpura thirty and in Chetgañj fifty-three (B. Verma 1935:44). A present-day Prinsep would have a much

more substantial task; so great has been the extent of temple and shrine construction (a process that is accelerating as the millennium approaches) that the total today would have to be put at between twenty to thirty times that of 1831.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the aim of this abridged history of Banaras is to provide a framework within which the group of the fifty-six Vināyakas can be dated. Three pre-Muslim dynasties have been identified as possible candidates for their establishment: the Pratihāras, the Kalacuris and the Gāhaḍavālas. In addition to this, the material outlined in this chapter is also of value in suggesting the approximate date for the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, the Māhātmya which provides the first textual reference to the group of the fifty-six Vināyakas. Since this major work which proclaims the Lordship of Viśvanātha was probably finalised during the period of Muslim rule, attention has been paid to those periods which can be deemed 'tolerant', as evidenced by the building of Hindu shrines, and those which are considered 'intolerant', as evidenced by the destruction of Hindu shrines. If the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* was produced during Muslim rule, the possibility must at least be considered that the authors of this work were also responsible for establishing the fifty-six Vināyakas as a group. Finally, it was necessary to look at the contribution of the Marāṭhas to the reconstruction of Banaras. Given the prevalence and the popularity of Gaṇeśa in Maharashtra, and the fact that the Marāṭhas played such a large part in the reconstruction of the city, the possibility has to be entertained that the Marāṭhas may have reconstructed the fifty-six Vināyakas in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries using the detailed blue-print given in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. Little in this chapter is gratuitous: even the early history can be shown to be relevant to the investigation in hand. The attempt to trace and date the formation of Muslim settlements will be important because, while an existing Vināyaka might have avoided destruction, it is improbable that anyone could attempt to establish a Vināyaka for the first time in a new or established Muslim settlement. This has implications for the concluding argument of the thesis. The overall impression is of the very chequered history of Banaras and one obscured by a frustrating lack of reliable source material. Banaras has remained an important city commercially, educationally and religiously from its inception but slips in and out of political history almost unobtrusively. This makes the investigator's task more difficult but equally more interesting in that it requires the utilisation of many different types of material, which the next chapter on the evolution of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa will address.

Fig.1. The Early History of Banaras
(ca. sixth century BCE to the Gupta period).

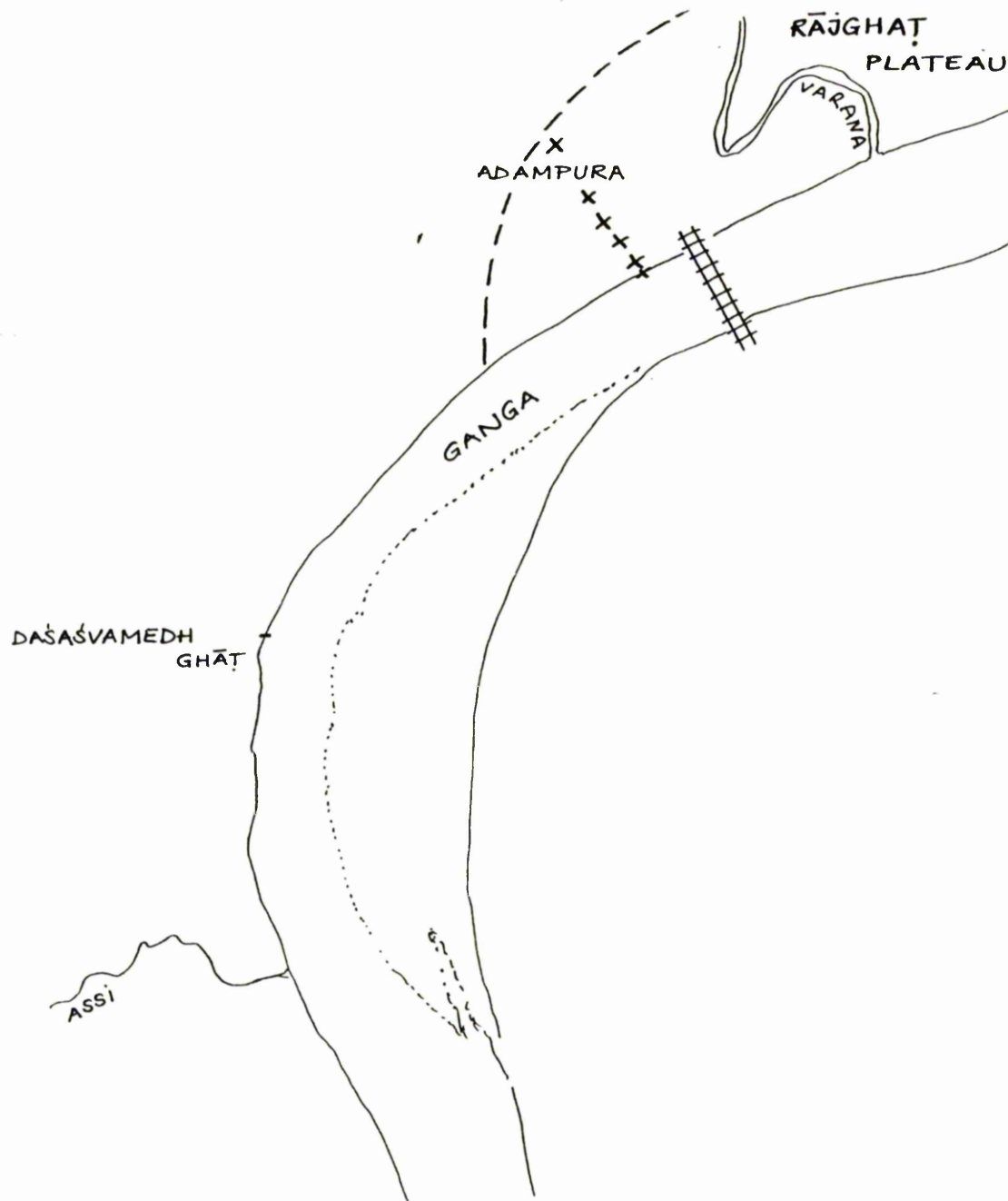


Fig. 2. From the Gupta period to the Gāhaḍavālas.

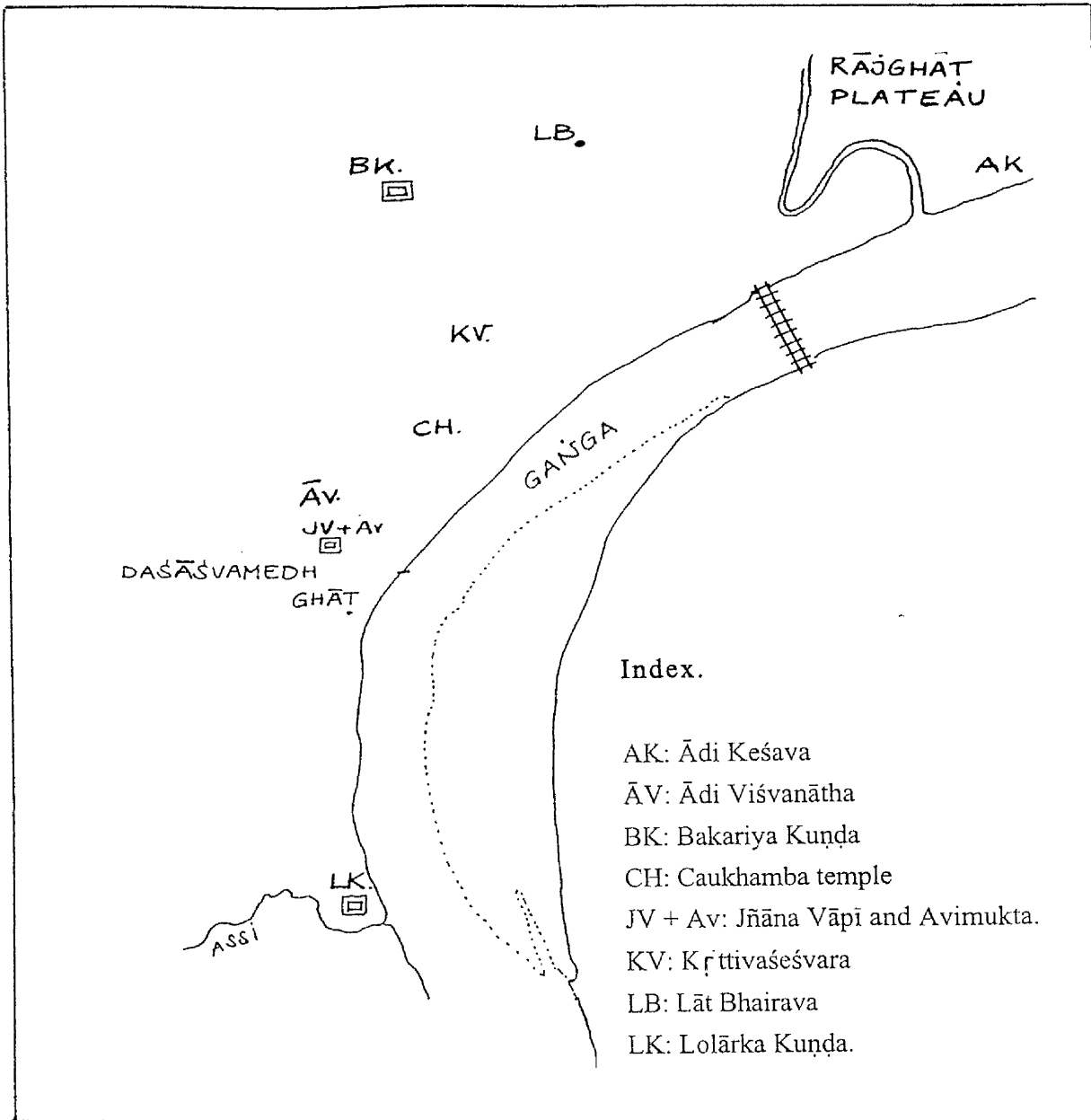
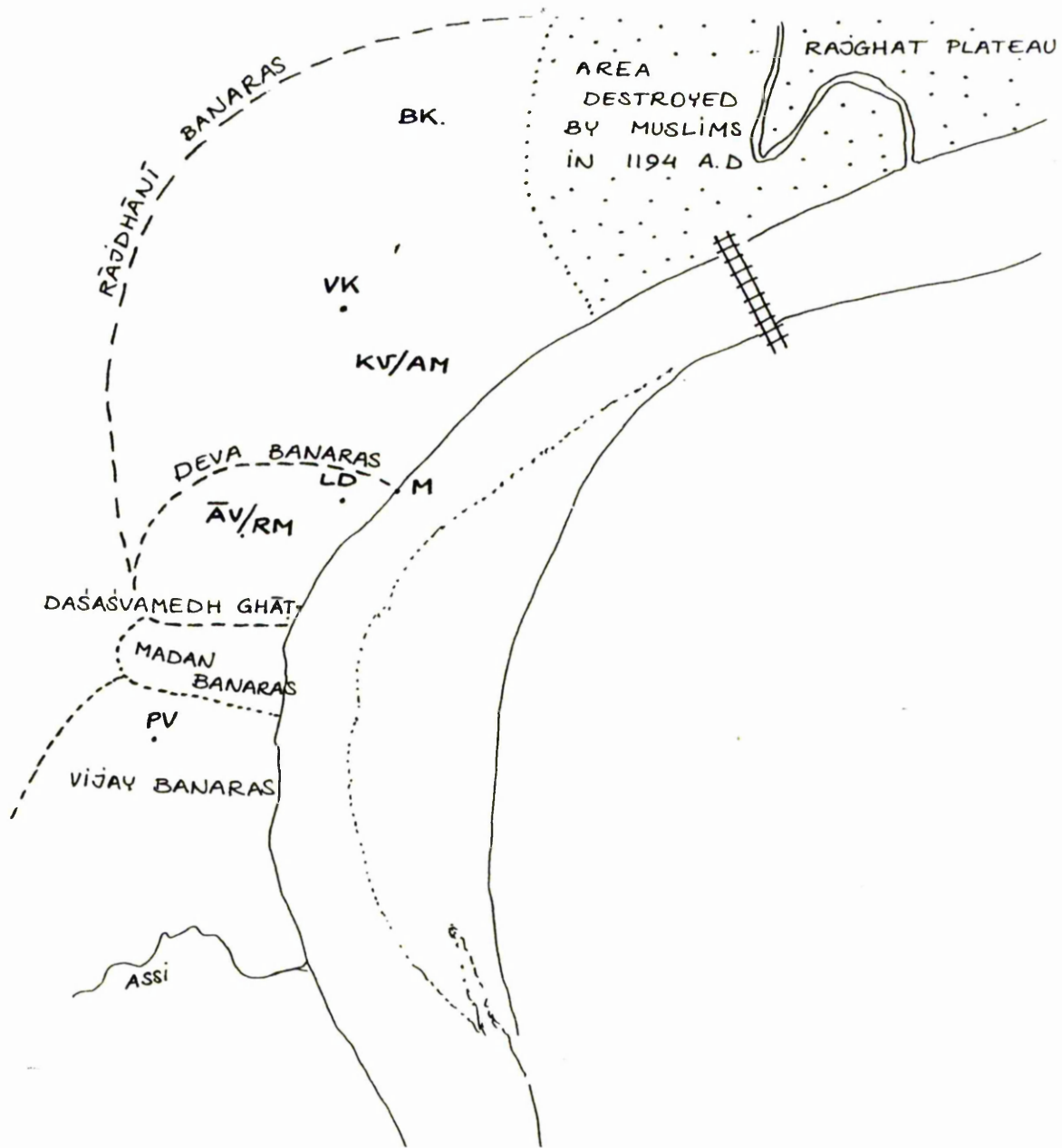


Fig. 3. The Delhi Sultanate (ca. 1200 to 1526 CE).



ĀV/ RM. Ādi Viśveśvara temple, replaced by Razziya mosque.

BK. Bakariya Kuṇḍa

KV/ AM. Kṛtīvāsa temple, replaced by the Alamgir mosque.

LD. Lāl Darwāza mosque.

M. Maṇikarṇeśvara temple, established 1302 A.D.

PV. Possible location of the Pārśvanātha Jain temple in Bhelupura.

VK. Vṛddhakāleśvara temple.

----- The four sections of the city according to Jina Prabhu.

Fig. 4. The Viśvanātha area, with reference to the Ādi Viśvanātha site
(map courtesy of Rana P. B. Singh 1993).

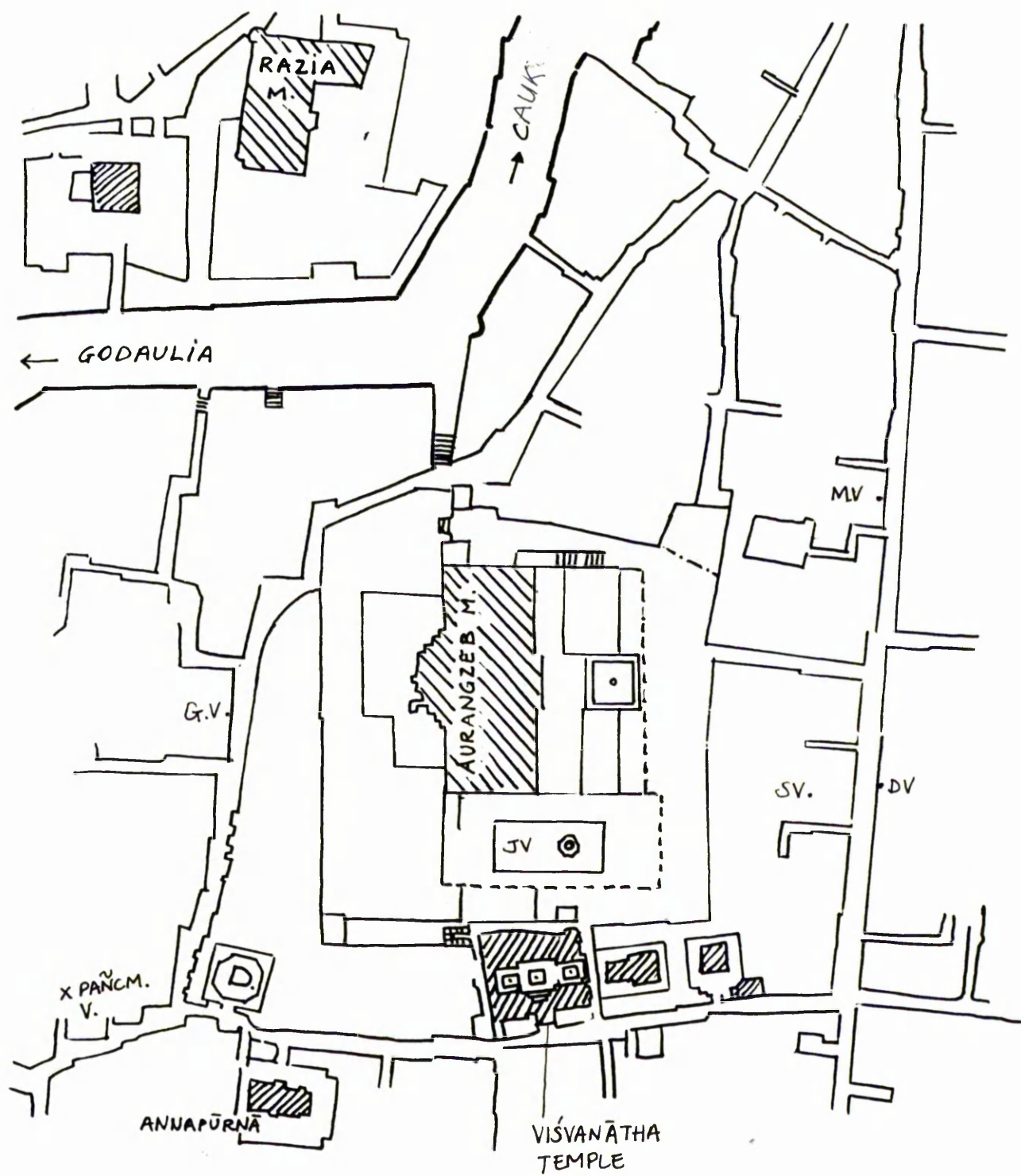


Fig. 5. The Mughal Period:
The shrines and *ghāṭs* as described by Varadarāja
(ca. 1550 to 1717 CE).

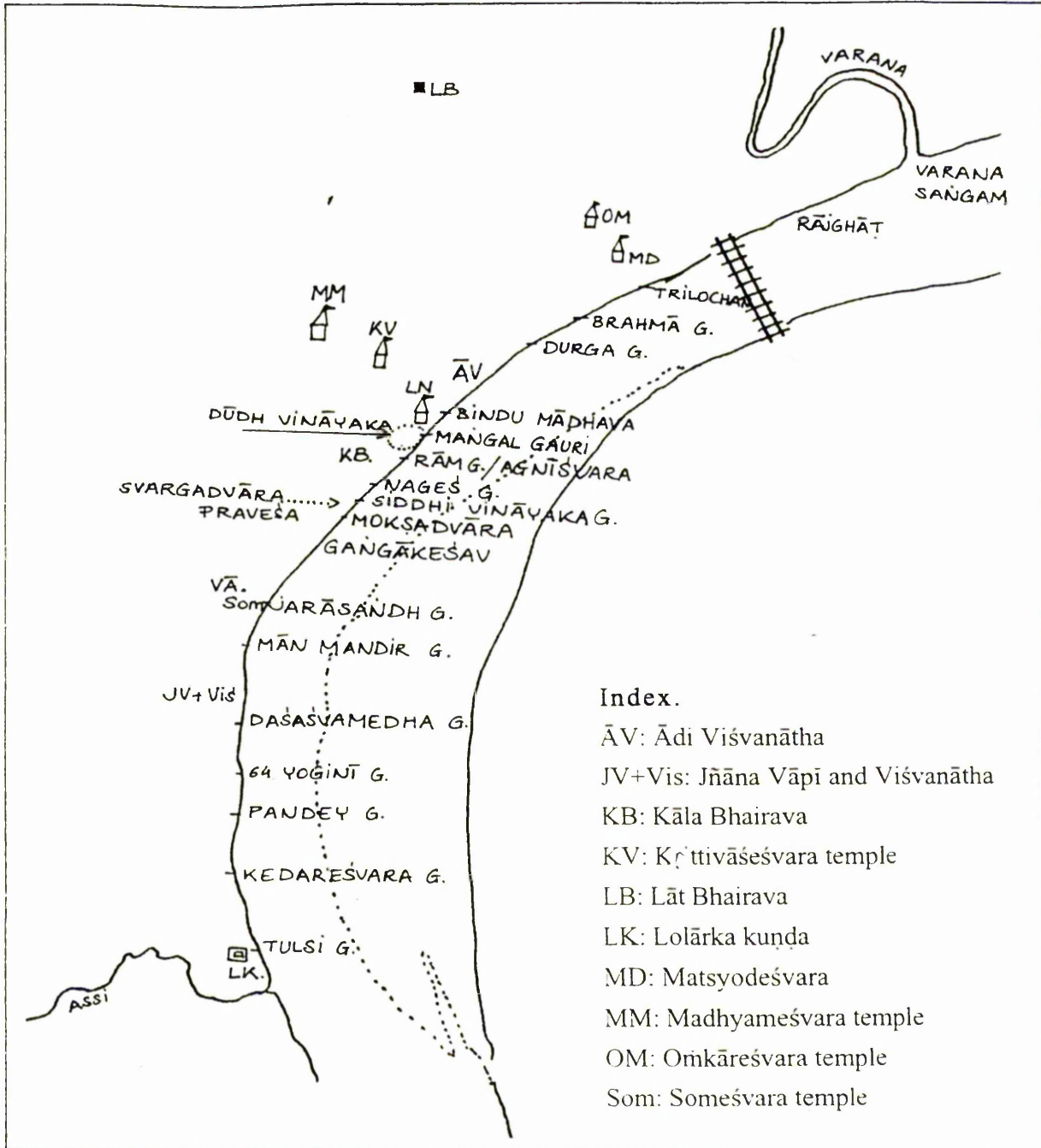
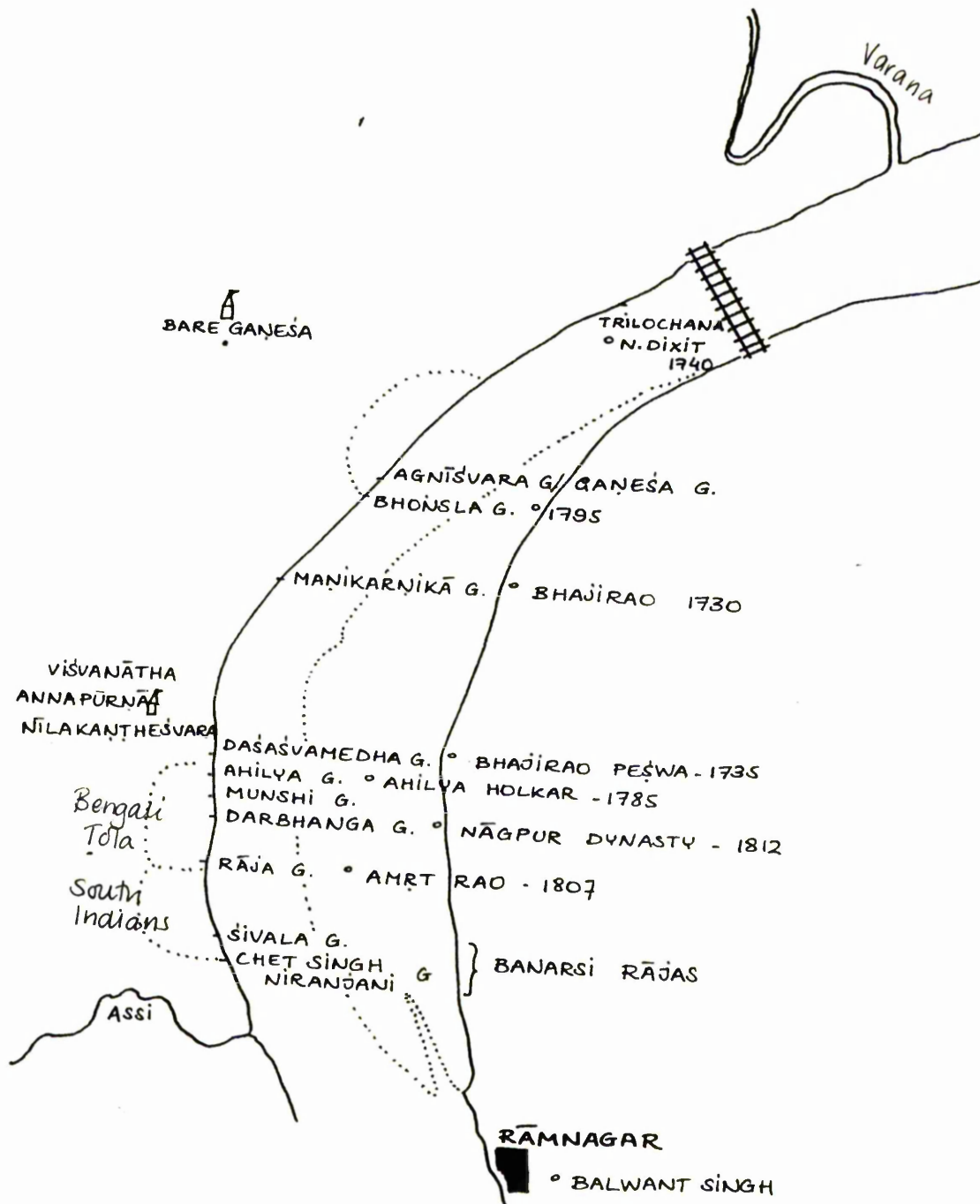
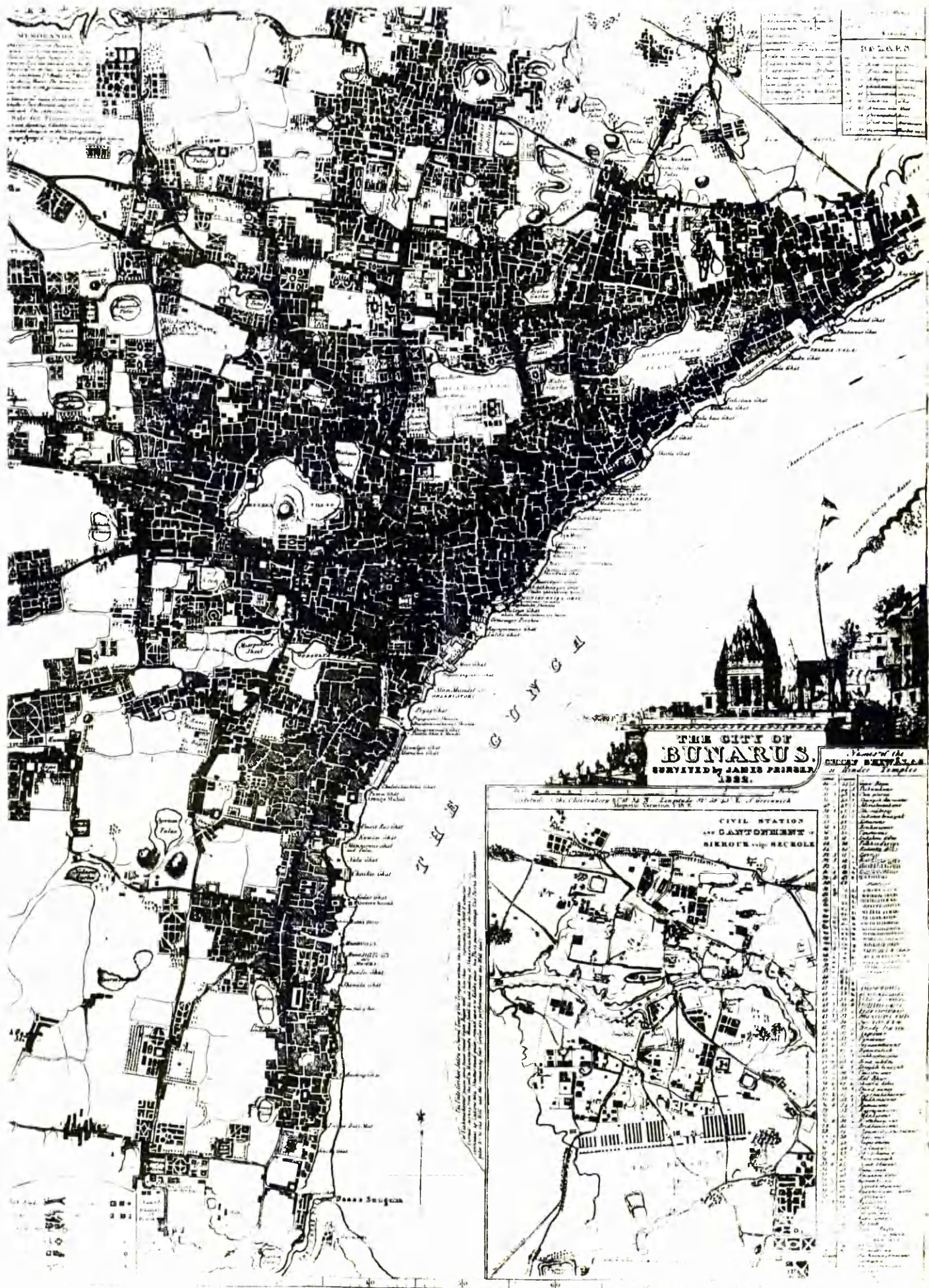


Fig. 6. The Marāṭha Supremacy, the Legacy of Rāṇī Bhavānī and the Rājas of Banaras (eighteenth to nineteenth century).





CHAPTER TWO

The Origins and Development of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa

Central to this investigation of the fifty-six Vināyakas is the question of the origins and development of Vināyaka, his names, his mythology, his attributes and his iconographic forms. This chapter traces this development from putative origins to Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa's present day status, acknowledging the present state of scholarship on the subject. Since the first monograph on Gaṇeśa by Alice Getty (1936) until the most recent study on the elephant-headed deity by Thapan (1997),⁶⁴ the origins of Gaṇeśa have proved to be the most studied and analysed aspect of his character. Most of the accounts provide hypotheses as to the god's evolution in literature or iconography, thereby focusing on the elephant features of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa,⁶⁵ but here attention will also be directed to a hitherto neglected aspect of his evolution: the dynamics behind his rise to prominence.⁶⁶ This account will be chronological, using iconographic, literary and other historical sources to analyse the development of the deity from his original demonic nature as Vināyaka to his present status as a happy, fun-loving deity, invoked by the name of Gaṇeśa or Gaṇapati, the Remover of Obstacles, the Lord of Beginnings, and the Guarantor of Success and Prosperity. At this stage in the thesis a chronological account of the evolution of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa has little to offer to the main analysis of the thesis, namely, the fifty-six Vināyakas in Banaras. However, as will be clear from the last two chapters of this thesis, the chronological analysis of the development of Vināyaka's character will prove valuable for the investigation of the group of fifty-six in Banaras. Since the deity's character is complex, a full analysis will be provided of the evolution of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa and of the dynamics behind his rise to power. This will make the subsequent argument both clearer and more persuasive.

The elephant's head is Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa's most obvious feature, providing him with a distinct identity even, as Thapan states, with a *raison d'être* (1997:42). The earliest references in literature to Vināyaka do not mention his elephant features but, as will become apparent, it was the elephant-head which determined the god's evolution and rise to prominence. This prototype of Vināyaka became linked with the elephant which enjoyed a sacred status in ancient India.

⁶⁴ Monographs on Gaṇeśa providing theories concerning the deity's origins include: Getty (1971 (1936)); Rassat (1954); Courtright (1985); Shanti Lal Nagar (1992); Brown (ed.) (1992); S. K. R. Rao (1992) and Thapan (1997).

⁶⁵ Many attempts to explain Gaṇeśa's elephant head and his rise to power have failed to provide a complete and satisfying explanation. Courtright (1985:12) expresses these frustrations: 'It is impossible to say just how Gaṇeśa came into existence or whether there was a distinct Gaṇeśa before he appears in the modes he does in the Brahmanic sources'; 'There may not be any compelling evidence for Gaṇeśa prior to his emergence into the Brahmanic fold, simply because he was never there!'

⁶⁶ Only the recent publication by Thapan (1997), published while this thesis was being finalised, has addressed this question.

Courtright (1985), Thapan (1997), Srivastava (1989), Zimmer (1962:102-106) and many others have dealt at great length with the status and the symbolism of the elephant in ancient India. They trace its history from the mature Indus culture, when the animal was first represented on seals and on terracotta, to the Buddhist period which gave an extra sacred dimension to the elephant by linking it to the previous lives of the Buddha. In this connection, the single tusk of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa should also be mentioned. The single tusk is one of the main characteristics of the god and the Puranic myths do not offer any convincing explanation as to why Vināyaka is represented with only one tusk. Thapan has linked the single tusk to the single horn of the unicorn, a mythological animal known to Indus culture (1997:50-52). The horn supposedly symbolised male virility, and seals from the Indus civilisation have been found depicting other animals with one horn.⁶⁷ Eliade (1958:164) suggests that the single horn of the unicorn is related to fertility worship and the moon. The association between the moon and Vināyaka's single tusk is made in a Maharashtrian variation of Gaṇeśa's mythology,⁶⁸ thus lending some support to Thapan's hypothesis.

From the sixth century BCE onwards increasing use is made of elephant symbolism: places were named after the various epithets of the animal and tribes, clans and kings used the elephant either as a name or as a symbol to denote their strength and prestige. Evidence of elephant-related names given by Thapan (1997:54-56) suggests that the animal enjoyed great prestige throughout the north of India, more specifically in the Doab region, the Ganga basin, and parts of Gujarat and Orissa. From about the third century BCE onwards the elephant was a popular motif in Buddhist art. The story of the Buddha's birth features a white elephant and many of the Jātakas, relating the previous lives of the Enlightened One, include stories about the elephant.⁶⁹ Later renderings of the Buddha's birth scene in which the Buddha is bathed by two elephants attest the popularity of elephant motifs and also show the association between elephants and snakes.⁷⁰ According to Thapan (1997:73), the role of the elephant and the *nāga* as protectors and bestowers of wealth and prosperity changed in later Buddhist art, being reduced

⁶⁷ A Mohenjo-Daro seal represents a rhinoceros with one horn (Thapan 1997:51).

⁶⁸ The story relates how Gaṇeśa, having eaten too much, falls off his rat. His belly splits and all the *modakas* roll over the ground. The moon, watching the scene, starts laughing. Gaṇeśa becomes so angry that he pulls out his tusk and throws it at the moon, thereby causing it to disappear. The other gods plead with Gaṇeśa to restore the honour of the moon, but Gaṇeśa decides that, as a punishment, the moon will have four cycles. This story is given an extra dimension in Maharashtra where, on the Gaṇeśa Caturthī festival, one is not supposed to look at the moon. If one does so, one has to throw stones on the roof of one's neighbour in order to ward off the imminent danger (Getty 1971:20; Courtright 1985:81). Courtright (1980:75; 1985:77) associates the myths narrating Gaṇeśa's single tusk with the beheading of the god and suggests that it is merely another form of 'symbolic castration'.

⁶⁹ For an overview of elephant symbolism in Buddhism, see Thapan (1997:55-60) and Courtright (1985:22-27). The white elephant occupies a special position in Buddhism. Relying on the story of the Buddha's conception during which a white elephant entered the womb of his mother, scholars believe that the reference to the white elephant is a reference to the Buddha himself. Examples of early Buddhist art show that the elephant had a significant role. For further details on the symbolism of the elephant in early Indian art, see Srivastava (1989).

⁷⁰ Iconographical evidence suggests that the link between the elephant and the serpent is of a later date. Whereas the birth scenes on the *stūpas* show the Buddha being bathed by two elephants, later Gupta representations of this scene depict two snakes bathing the child (Thapan 1997:72).

to that of being mere guardians on account of the transfer of their previous function to other deities.

The elephant's rise to prominence in Buddhism runs parallel with its rise in status within the Vedic and Brahmanic creed. The *vāhana* of Indra, one of the major Vedic deities, is the elephant Airāvata. Vedic texts trace the origins of Airāvata back to the realm of the *nāgas*, thus providing another example of an early association of the elephant with snakes.⁷¹ It is this connection which links the elephant also with water and subsequently with fertility. As the prestige of Indra declined, so did the prestige of Airāvata and, later, Purāṇas tell of his defeat at the hands of a demon. Representations of Gaja-Lakṣmī on the *stūpa* of Sanchi, dated to the second century BCE, provide further evidence of the elephant's symbolic connection with water⁷² and fertility.⁷³ The association of elephants and rain dates from the Vedic period when elephants, along with snakes, were considered to be linked with the clouds (Zimmer 1962:102-109). Zimmer (1962:108) refers to a ritual described in the *Hastyāyurveda* in which an elephant, painted in white (the colour of Airāvata), symbolised both rainfall and fertility. More evidence of the elephant's association with rainfall is provided by K. S. Srivastava (1989:37-43).

Despite the late representations of the elephant in Jain art,⁷⁴ it appears that the animal's association with the twenty-third Jina, Pārśvanātha, was established in the pre-Christian era. Thapan (1997:74) has suggested that the link between Pārśvanātha and the elephant can be explained by the fact that the Jina, living in the eighth century BCE, was from Kāśī, which was one of the regions in which the elephant was venerated. As in Buddhism and Brāhmanism, Pārśvanātha's elephant is often associated with the snake.

A similar process of the increasing veneration, and possible sanctification, of the elephant is evidenced by material from the north-western corner of the subcontinent. Most scholars examining the elephant's symbolic representations in what is currently Afghanistan refer to coins of the Indo-Greek rulers of the Bactrian area (around 150 BCE). A coin of the fourth century BCE, however, from Afghanistan (though found in Sicily), depicts a deity

⁷¹ In the *Atharva Veda*, Airāvata is considered to be the son of Irāvāt who is the chief of the *nāgas*. Although Airāvata later becomes the elephant mount of Indra, some Puranic texts refer to him as a snake and the *Agni Purāṇa* (I:19:27) states that he should be worshipped on *Nāga Pañcamī*. The same Purāṇa represents him as one of the eight *diggajas* or 'elephants of the four directions' (III:269:14-23).

⁷² *Vāyu Purāṇa* I:51:44 suggests that elephants, snakes, clouds and mountains all found their origins in water.

⁷³ Thaplyal's argument (1970:112) that the representations of Śrī-Lakṣmī showered by elephants on the Buddhist *stūpas* are in fact representations of the Buddha's mother Māyā, cannot be ruled out. In this connection Foucher's view that the concept of 'Gaja-Lakṣmī' found its origins in the concept of Māyā is not generally accepted, as the latter concept is of a much earlier date (Thaplyal 1970:112). A monograph discussing the different iconographic aspects of the Gaja-Lakṣmī representations is found in Singh (1983).

⁷⁴ Thapan provides some examples of Jain statues of the early and late medieval period, taken from the work of Umakant Shah.

wearing an elephant scalp on his or her head, thus suggesting that the veneration and worship of elephants in this area is of considerable antiquity (Scullard 1948:159). It seems that admiration for the elephant was the result of the encounters of the Greek armies of Alexander the Great with Indian rulers such as the mighty Porus, the king of the Punjab (Basham 1991:50).⁷⁵ The increase in the status of the elephant was reflected in the numerous Greek coins depicting either the elephant in full form⁷⁶ or in the form of the elephant-skull worn by the Greek conquerors.⁷⁷ Although these coins do not contribute to the evolution of an elephant-headed deity, they attest the significance of the elephant in the Greek territories.

The first evidence of an elephant deity occurs on the coins of Demetrius I, Menander and Maues, which depict an elephant with a bell around its neck (Dhavalikar 1980-1981:139). A coin of Apollodotus shows the animal with a band around its body (Gardner 1966:plate IX, 8, 9). This motif becomes an important feature on later coins where the elephant is represented together with the Greek god Zeus.⁷⁸ Whereas some scholars' hypotheses explaining the coin are somewhat far fetched,⁷⁹ the theory suggested by Tarn and Banerjea deserves more attention, for it might help to elucidate the iconographic origins of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa. Based on a description by Philostratus which gives an account of an old elephant in the Sun temple of Taxila, it has been argued by Tarn that the elephant with the bell was none other than the elephant dedicated by Alexander the Great to the Sun temple in Taxila. From the account of Apollonius given by Philostratus, it is known that the people of the city anointed the animal with myrrh and garlands of flowers (Tarn 1951:164).⁸⁰ Banerjea (1938:300-301), on the other hand, states that the

⁷⁵ The encounter between Alexander and Porus took place in 323 BCE when the Greeks had crossed the Jhelum river. In the battle which followed Porus was taken captive. However, Alexander the Great was so impressed with the king's personality that he appointed him as vassal for the Punjab (Basham 1991:50). After the defeat of Porus, the admiration for the elephant grew amongst the Greeks and soon the animal became a symbol of status and power. When Alexander's general Seleucus Nicator lost the territory of Afghanistan to the Maurya king Chandragupta in 305 BCE, he asked for five hundred elephants in exchange.

⁷⁶ Coins representing the elephant in its full form are those issued by Heliocles, Archebius, Zoilus, Azes, Antimachus, Antialcidas and Menander to name but a few (Gardner 1966; Dhavalikar 1980-1981:137).

⁷⁷ In *Corpus of the Indo-Greek Coins* Lahiri writes: 'The craze among the Greek kings for the elephant, the veritable tank on ancient battle-fields, is well depicted on coins of Demetrius I. On all his 'Herakles-crowning-himself' coins the obverse bust of Demetrius is adorned with the scalp of an elephant' (1965:23). This peculiar head-dress is also found on the coins of Menander and other kings (Gardner 1966:plate II, 9-10 and 11-12).

⁷⁸ A coin issued by Antialcidas depicts the bust of the king, while on the reverse of the coin is Zeus sitting on his throne and holding a *nikei* in his hand. The *nikei* bears a wreath. On the left of the coin we see the forepart of an elephant with a bell around its neck. The elephant is raising its trunk in acceptance of the wreath (Dhavalikar 1980-1981:140; Gardner 1966:25, plate VII). The same motif appears in four variations on the coins of Antialcidas. One variation is Zeus holding a sceptre and sitting on a throne with a wreath-holding *nikei* in his hand. On the left there is an elephant with its trunk in the air and a bell around its neck. A second variation shows Zeus sitting on his throne, holding a sceptre and a wreath. The elephant, depicted on the left side of the coin, grasps the wreath with its trunk. Here the *nikei* is absent. A third variety shows Zeus on the left of the throne, the *nikei* in his right hand and the sceptre in his left hand. On the left there is an elephant carrying off the wreath from the *nikei*. The last variety depicts the elephant at the right of the coin (Dhavalikar 1980-1981:140).

⁷⁹ Dhavalikar has suggested that there is a similarity between the elephant on the coins and the Gaṇeśa image of the Bhumara temple which also wears a bell around his neck, which is an unusual feature for Gaṇeśa. Coomaraswamy (1971:14-15) has tried to explain the appearance of the bell by referring to an ancient Tibetan legend, but a connection between the Tibetan story and Gaṇeśa is, except for the bell, non-existent.

elephant with the bell was a representation of the elephant deity of Kapisa, the present day Begram in Afghanistan.

The existence of an elephant deity in Kapisa provides encouragement in the quest for a deity which could have given rise to a prototype of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa. That the elephant deity of Kapisa is not just a scholarly myth is attested by numismatic material dated from 170 to 150 BCE. A coin issued by the Indo-Greek ruler Eukratides, shows on the obverse the diademed bust of a king wearing a helmet. The reverse depicts Zeus sitting on a throne and holding a wreath and a palm. To the right of the throne there is the front half of an elephant and to the left there is a Kharoṣṭhī inscription: *kavi (pi)śive nagara-devata* (the deity of Kapisa) (Lahiri 1965:plate XVI; Dhavalikar 1980-1981:141-142). Since the discovery of this Kapisa coin by Charles Mason, it has been the subject of lengthy discussions. Some numismatists are of the opinion that the deity on the coin is not Zeus but a female goddess.⁸¹ Narain suggests that the deity on the coin is a representation of the city's fortune, supporting his theory by referring to similar coins of Hippostratus. On the basis of some similarities between Indra and the deity of Kapisa, Banerjea concludes that there may have been some confusion between Zeus and Indra on the Indo-Bactrian coins (1941:258-259).⁸²

Despite the divergence of these various theories, it is probable that the deity depicted on the Kapisa coin is not the Greek god Zeus but the city deity of Kapisa. The travel account of Hiuen Tsiang (seventh century CE) provides further information about this city god and demonstrates that as late as the seventh century CE the people of Kapisa venerated the tutelary deity Piluśāra (Pi-Lo-Sa-Lo) who had the form of an elephant.⁸³ Although the description of Hiuen Tsiang dates from the seventh century, it is known that the devotional tradition centred on Piluśāra was of great antiquity.⁸⁴ Having studied the account of the Chinese traveller, Rapson was the first numismatist to link the figures of the elephant and the *pilos* (mountain) of the Kapisa coin with the legend about the elephant deity. The elephant represents the elephant

⁸¹ Whitehead observes that the divinity in question was, in fact, a city goddess. He came to this conclusion because the divinity resembled the representation of the city Tyche on a coin of Hippostratus (Dhavalikar 1980-1981:141).

⁸² Banerjea identifies the enthroned deity with Indra who was also known as the *yakṣa* of Indrapura, the partly shown elephant on the coin then was a representation of Indra's mount Airāvata. Banerjea also makes a connection between the inscription referring to Kapisa and Indra's abode which is called Śvetavalāya. According to the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsiang, who visited the area in the seventh century, Śvetavalāya was a suburb of Kapisa.

⁸³ 'To the south-west of the town is Mount Pi-Lo-Sa-Lo (Piluśāra): the mountain spirit takes the form of an elephant, hence the name. In the old days when Tathāgata was alive, the spirit called Piluśāra (siang-kein, i.e. elephant-fixed), asked the Lord of the World and twelve hundred Arhats (to partake of his hospitality). On the mountain crag was a solid rock; here it was that Tathāgata received the offerings, O spirit' (Beal 1963:127; Dhavalikar 1980-1981:142 and 1992:53; Tam 1951:96-98).

⁸⁴ The name Piluśāra is linked with the Tamil word for Gaṇeśa, Pillaiyar, which is derived from *pallu* or *peḷḷa* meaning tooth or tusk (Getty 1936:1; Narain 1992:25). Another possibility is that Pillaiyar is derived from *pille* which means 'a noble child'. In Pali *pillaka* has the same meaning. Caldwell, as quoted by Narain (1992:25), states that the origins of this word are Scythian and they have links with the Latin *pullus* which means the young of an animal. Rassat (1954:7) notes that *pilla* was a name which was attributed to animals and plants. The word *pīl* supposedly meant young corn. In Aramaic, the language which was spoken in the north-west, the word for elephant is *pīl*.



deity and the *pilos* would then be the symbol for the holy mountain on which this deity resided. In this context, the coin of Eukradites could be considered as evidence that the cult of an elephant deity in Kapisa already existed in the second century BCE. The combination of both Zeus and the elephant god is interpreted by Tarn (1951:137-138) as a representation of the replacement of Zeus by the locally worshipped elephant god. Dhavalikar (1992:54) points out that the link between Zeus and the elephant god of Kapisa was their mountain-dwelling. He writes that, 'since he [Piluśāra] was a god of the mountains, the Greek rulers naturally tried to identify him with their own Zeus, for to the Greeks a mountain god could not well become anything but Zeus'.

The representations of the elephant deity described above suggest that by the beginning of the Common Era there was probably an elephant deity in the north-western corner of the subcontinent. Although no such conclusion can be drawn from the Buddhist, Brahmanic and Jain material of the plains, the evidence indicates the sacred status of the elephant and an association with *nāgas*, water and fertility. Neither the deity from Afghanistan, nor the sacred elephants in the early Indian art should be considered as prototypes of Vināyaka, however: rather, they provide some of the necessary elements for the assemblage of Vināyaka's features.

The name Vināyaka is considered to be the oldest name for the deity, although from the context in which it was used for the first time in extant texts, it is clear that Vināyaka had, except for certain characteristics, little in common with the present elephant-headed deity Gaṇeśa. The name is derived from *vi-* and *nāya* which can have several meanings. One is 'controlling, imposing order, regulating'. However, it could also be derived from *vi-* and *nī* which means 'to lead away, to drive away, to dispel'. This etymology would correspond with the present function of Gaṇeśa as the Lord of Obstacles or the Dispeller of Obstacles. A third explanation of the word *vināyaka* is offered by an eighth-century commentary on the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* by Viśvarūpa. It states that *vināyaka* is derived from *vinīyukta* meaning 'the one who is appointed as the head of a distinct class of men' (Sastri 1982:174). Narain (1992:22) adds that 'if the *visarga vi* indicates the quality of distinction (*viśiṣṭa*), it means 'without' or 'deprived of' (a leader), too'. This new approach then leads us to Vināyaka as either a distinct individual leader or a group without a leader.⁸⁵ Opinions concerning these interpretations are divided but it seems that, in the context of the character of the four Vināyakas in the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra*, all the explanations mentioned above are possible. Related to Vināyaka are the names Vighneśvara, Vighneśa and Vighnahartā. They are all based on the same word stem *vi-ghna* which means 'obstacle', Vighneśvara and Vighneśa thus meaning Lord of Obstacles whereas Vighnahartā means the Remover of Obstacles.

⁸⁵ Thapan considers this the only explanation for the word 'Vināyaka' (1997:84).

Scholars examining the origins of Vināyaka agree that the earliest occurrence of the word is found in the *Mānava Gr̥hya Sūtra* (II:14; *Vināyaka Kalpa*).⁸⁶ It devotes an entire chapter, called the *Vināyaka Kalpa*, to Vināyaka worship (Dresden 1941:159-164). Recently, however, Thapan has noted that a reference to Vināyaka, predating the Gr̥hya Sūtra, has been found on the Sanchi *stūpa*.⁸⁷ It is because of the nature of this inscription, referring to a Vināyaka as an exalted personality or a Buddhist saint, that Thapan regards Viśvarūpa's explanation as right (1997:85).⁸⁸ The four Vināyakas mentioned in the inscription, Śālakaṭaṅkaṭa, Kūṣmāṇḍarājaputra, Usmita and Devayajana, are described as malevolent creatures who harm people and who need to be appeased in specific ways.⁸⁹ The Sūtra does not refer to any peculiar physical characteristics, nor does it mention any of the good qualities the later Gaṇeśa possesses. Thapan's work is useful here, as she rightly questions why there has not yet been any attempt to analyse these four Vināyakas nor to explain why a being of sanctity to Buddhists is portrayed as demonic in this Sūtra. Although some parts of her explanation appear to be somewhat far fetched and unsafe, some of the points she makes are relevant here.

The first Vināyaka, Śālakaṭaṅkaṭa, could, according to Thapan (1997:86-87), have been related to a lineage of *rākṣasas* bearing the same name. Because the nature of the Vināyakas was very similar to that of *rākṣasas*, this explanation is plausible. *Kūṣmāṇḍarājaputra* literally means 'the son of the king of the Kūṣmāṇḍas'. The word *kūṣmāṇḍa* has two meanings, one being a type of gourd, the second being a class of demi-gods in early Buddhism. Although Thapan (1997:89) also devotes considerable space to explaining the symbolism of the gourd in ancient Indian rituals, the explanation she provides for the second meaning is more interesting in the present context.⁹⁰ The 'Kūṣmāṇḍas' or 'Kumbhāṇḍas' as a class of demi-gods are referred to in early Buddhist texts, as well as in sculptures. Their leader is known as Virūḍhaka and is represented as the guardian of the southern quarter.⁹¹ In later Buddhist art this Virūḍhaka is depicted with a helmet made of the skin of an elephant's head (Agarwala 1987:180) and, in the seventh century Hiuen Tsiang describes Virūḍhaka as the 'Lord of the South' and the 'Elephant-Lord' (Watters 1905:35). Although Virūḍhaka is not represented with an elephant head on the Sanchi *stūpa*, the fact that he becomes known as the 'Elephant-Lord' guarding the southern

⁸⁶ The dates for the Gr̥hya Sūtras are still under discussion. Kane (1968-74, volume I, part 1:14-15) is of the opinion that they should be dated between 600 and 300 BCE, whereas Macdonell (1990:208) regards between 500 and 200 BCE as more appropriate. The tradition of the Sūtras as a whole is known to have incorporated elements from both Vedic and non-Vedic heritage. The rules for the householders, as proposed by the Sūtras, also accommodated widespread folk values. In order to make a distinction between Vedic and non-Vedic sources, symbols, animals and divinities which were held sacred by the masses were marked as *laukika devatās* which literally translates as 'folk deities'. From the second century BCE onwards, the traditional Vedic deities became syncretised with these folk elements (Narain 1992:30; Gonda 1977 (b):582).

⁸⁷ The *Vināyaka Kalpa* as translated and analysed by Dresden is given as an Appendix to this thesis.

⁸⁸ For a more detailed account of this inscription and its translation, see Thapan (1997:85).

⁸⁹ In the group of the fifty-six Vināyakas we find three: Śālakaṭaṅkaṭa, Kūṣmāṇḍa and Rājaputra.

⁹⁰ Throughout her book Thapan has written the name 'Kūṣmāṇḍarājaputra' as 'Kuṣmāṇḍarājaputra'.

⁹¹ Both the Kūṣmāṇḍas and Virūḍhaka are represented on the *toranas* of the Sanchi *stūpa*. Whereas the former are depicted as typical *yakṣas*, having a dwarfish form, Virūḍhaka is shown as a normal being (Thapan 1997:87).

direction is noteworthy because in the later Puranic mythology Gaṇeśa takes over the position of the guardian of the southern direction.⁹² Usmita Vināyaka proves to be a problem as no further details have been found, leading Thapan to suggest that he may have been a local deity in the area where the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* was composed. The term *devayajana* literally means 'the offering or sacrifice to the god'. Based on material in the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda*, Thapan believes that *devayajana* stands for the worship of non-Vedic deities disdained by Brahmanic religion. In her conclusion she proposes that the four Vināyakas mentioned in the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* were representations of particular people and practices in the region of the middle Ganga basin, where the Sūtra was allegedly composed.⁹³

Thapan's analysis elucidates the identity of the Vināyakas associating them with a host of beings who, through being closely linked to Buddhism, were considered demonic by the authors of the Sūtra.⁹⁴ Thapan's hypothesis is that many semi-deities and spirits venerated by Buddhists and Jains were taken into Brāhmanism as demonic forces later and usually associated with Śiva. The direct implication of this explanation for the identity of the Vināyakas is that the four Vināyakas in the Gṛhya Sūtra therefore should not be considered to be deities, but rather personifications of the concept of 'creators of obstacles' (Thapan 1997:95). An interesting dimension of the four Vināyaka concept is that they recall the idea of the four cardinal directions. As is discussed later, this idea of the association of four Vināyakas with the four directions is subsequently suggested by a ninth-century pillar in Ghatiyala.

Chronologically the next reference to the Vināyakas is in the *Mahābhārata*, although the references to the Vināyakas within this Epic are few and of various dates. The *śloka* of the *Śānti Parvan* mentioning Vināyaka, however, is dated to the same period as the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* (Thapan 1997:99) and thus should be included here. Thapan states that in the *Śānti Parvan* (284:131) the Vināyakas are classified in the same category as the *bhūtas*, *piśācas* and *rākṣasas*. Her statement is supported by B. R. Sharma (1975:8) and Hazra (1948:267).⁹⁵ Hazra

⁹² Later Purāṇas also mention these Kūṣmāṇḍas; the *Vāyu Purāṇa* refers to them as one of the sixteen pairs of *piśāca* twins. Thapan suggests that the Kūṣmāṇḍas were possibly a clan who did not follow Brahmanical norms. She further notes that the reference in the *Vāyu Purāṇa* implies that the 'Kūṣmāṇḍas' belonged to one of the sixteen *janapadas*. Many of those *janapadas* were associated with the Buddha, Mahāvira or other heterodox teachers and thus did not follow Brahmanic norms. The fact that they are referred to as *iśācas* supports this suggestion according to Thapan (1997:88).

⁹³ Having examined two other closely related Sūtras, the *Kāthaka Gṛhya Sūtra* and the *Varāha Gṛhya Sūtra*, Thapan (1997:91) notes that these two texts do not mention the Vināyakas once although the rest of the text is very similar. Because of the omission of the Vināyakas in these two works, the author concludes that the reference to the Vināyakas in the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* must therefore be considered a regional characteristic of the middle Ganga basin.

⁹⁴ For a more detailed account of the demonic beings associated with Vināyakas and their significance in early Buddhism, see Thapan (1997:92-93).

⁹⁵ Julius Lipner points out that *Śānti Parvan* XII:284:131 does not exist in the critical edition. Appendix 1 of the *Śānti Parvan* (no. 28, lines 422-423), however, lists *na rākṣasāḥ piśācā vā na bhūtā na vināyakāḥ / vighnaṁ kuryur gr̥he tasya yatrāyaṁ paṭhyate stavaḥ ||*. Lipner translates this as: 'Nor can demons, ogres, ghosts or Vināyakas create obstacles in the house of the one where this praise is recited' (personal communication, November 1999).

further states that another verse in the epic suggests a plurality of Vināyakas and their character as the creators of obstacles (1948:267, footnote 15).⁹⁶ Again the critical edition shows no such passage in the reference given (*Āraṇyaka Parvan* 65:23), but, in Appendix I:10 of the *Āraṇyaka Parvan*, line sixty-two resembles the Hazra citation. A further reference to Gaṇeśvaras-Vināyakas will be discussed later since it appears in what is considered to be a later edition of the *Mahābhārata*.

The references to Vināyakas do not provide any information as to their appearance.⁹⁷ A reference to an elephant-headed deity, however, is found in various versions of the *Sabhā Parvan* (10:35)⁹⁸ where one of the characters in the entourage of Kubera is called Dantin. Since Dantin features alongside other *yakṣa* figures, it is clear from the context that the Dantin mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* is an elephant-headed *yakṣa*, rather than a prototype of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa.⁹⁹ This reference to Dantin does not stand alone; in the earlier *Black Yajurveda* two references to Dantin are found. The *gāyatrīs* of both the *Maitrāyaṇīya Saṃhitā* and the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* feature 'Dantin' or 'The one with the tusk or tooth'.¹⁰⁰ The *Maitrāyaṇīya Saṃhitā* refers to this deity as being tusked (*dantin*) and he is also *hastimukha* or 'elephant-headed'. The *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* describes the deity as tusked and as *vakratuṇḍa* which means 'the one with the curved trunk'. Dhavalikar (1992:56) has suggested that these *gāyatrīs* were later interpolations in the texts and therefore unreliable. An investigation of the context of these *gāyatrīs* proves Dhavalikar right. In successive invocations, other gods such as Śiva, Viṣṇu, Gaurī and Skanda are worshipped. These deities rose to prominence from the Gupta period onwards (third century CE) and this indicates a late date for the interpolation of the *gāyatrīs* referring to Dantin.¹⁰¹ Thapan (1997:101) agrees that the invocations are later additions but basing her arguments on evidence of an elephant-headed *yakṣa* as early as the second

⁹⁶ *na pūjā vigṛhṇa kartṛṇām atha vā prathamam kṛtā.*

⁹⁷ Despite the fact that there are no direct indications as to the elephant features of the Vināyakas, Thapan (1997:102) points out that 'two of the Vināyakas had links with the elephant'. Virūpākṣa, one of the beings considered in the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* as on the same level as the Vināyakas, is the Lord of Nāgas, but is depicted as an elephant when in the position of *diggaḥa*. Kūṣmāṇḍarājaputra is also associated with elephants, as discussed earlier. Although Virūpākṣa was indeed represented as an elephant, this does not immediately link the four Vināyakas with elephants. And the relation between Kūṣmāṇḍarājaputra and the elephants is not direct but through the connection with Virūdhaka.

⁹⁸ Curiously, although Dantin is mentioned in the Elysium Press edition translated by M. N. Dutt, this passage is not in the critical edition and nor does the version of it in the appendix (*Sabhā Parvan*, appendix I:3:18-27) contain any reference to Dantin.

⁹⁹ Thapan (1997:100) mentions other references in the *Mahābhārata* which could be considered as indications of the existence of an elephant deity. Mahākāya or 'the one with the large body' is now one of the epithets used for Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa. However, in the time of the epics, this name usually denoted Śiva.

¹⁰⁰ The *gāyatrīs* of the *Black Yajurveda* mark a change in the sense that they no longer invoke Savitṛ as was the case in the *Rgveda*. They address their respects to other gods such as Rudra, Durgā, Garuḍa and apparently also Dantin. The *Maitrāyaṇīya Saṃhitā* (2:9:1) reads *tat karaṭāya vidmahe hastimukhāya dhīmahi tan no danti pracodayāt*. The *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* (10:1) gives the following hymn: *tat puruṣāya vidmahe vakratuṇḍāya dhīmahi tan no danti pracodayāt* (Rocher 1992:70).

¹⁰¹ Rocher adds that the link between Dantin and Vināyaka was established by Sāyaṇa in his commentary on the *Āraṇyakas* (Rocher 1992:70, footnote 9). However, Sāyaṇa is dated to the fourteenth century (Frederic 1987:960) and thus is of no value in dating this interpolation.

century CE (see *supra*) and based on the reference in the *Mahābhārata*, she suggests that the reference to Dantin could be dated as early as the second century CE. This must surely be too early.

The *Vināyaka Śānti* of the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* (II:271-294), generally dated to the second or third century CE,¹⁰² describes the four Vināyakas as four manifestations of one single Vināyaka. Kane (volume V part II), Dresden (1941:157-164) and Rocher (1992:71) agree that the *Vināyaka Śānti* passage in the Smṛti is copied from the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra*. This misses the point. The Vināyaka in the *Vināyaka Śānti* was appointed by Rudra and Brahmā as 'the Leader of the *gaṇas*' in order to create obstacles in performances. The link with Śiva is here made explicit. It also makes clear why a *Vināyaka Śānti* is needed; that is, in order to propitiate the obstacle-creating Vināyaka who acts on Śiva's orders to spoil the performance of worship. Whereas in the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* the propitiation of the Vināyakas was because they possessed people who then needed to be released from their influence, here it is anticipatory, ensuring that they will not spoil the worship offered to the goddess and the Āditya. The Vināyakas determine whether worship will be successful or not. The reference to Mahāgaṇapati at the end is probably a reference to Śiva who, in that period, was often referred to by this name. The last *śloka* links Vināyaka worship to that of Ambikā. The connection between Ambikā and Vināyaka has given rise to far-reaching discussions.¹⁰³ Bhandarkar (1913:148) concluded that Ambikā was the mother of Vināyaka.¹⁰⁴ This statement is shown to be incorrect by Narain (1992:23, footnote 54) who claims that the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* asks for the adoration of the mother of Vināyaka and then of Ambikā.¹⁰⁵ The word *tataḥ* at the end seems to have been ignored by Bhandarkar. Just as one Vināyaka represents the four Vināyakas of the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra*, Ambikā personifies the seven characteristics of the goddess, implied in the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* (II:14:30).¹⁰⁶ The *Mitākṣarā* version of the

¹⁰² Kane (1968-74, volume I, part I:443) dates the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* between 100 and 300 CE, while Winternitz (1988:598) believes the Smṛti should be placed around the third or fourth century CE at the earliest. Macdonell (1990:208) suggests 350 CE as the most likely date. Since the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* also mentions Ambikā, Śiva and Skanda, the third century CE seems to be the most likely period for its composition. In the Smṛti Vināyaka is not yet considered to be linked to Śiva, thus suggesting that the *Vināyaka Kalpa* predates the composition of the *Purāṇas* in which the link between Vināyaka and Śiva is firmly established.

¹⁰³ Bhandarkar was the first to state that Ambikā was the mother of Gaṇeśa. After him many scholars, for instance Rassat (1954:29-30), have accepted his opinion, mainly because Vināyaka evolved into Gaṇeśa and Ambikā became Pārvatī, the mother of Gaṇeśa. However, Narain argues against this.

¹⁰⁴ 'The form of the ceremony contained in the Sūtra is unquestionably more ancient than that contained in the other work, the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti*, but the difference between the two shows that during the period that had elapsed between the composition of the Sūtra and that of the Smṛti, the four Vināyakas had become one Gaṇapati-Vināyaka, having Ambikā for his mother. 'The one Gaṇapati-Vināyaka, the son of Ambikā, was introduced into the Hindu pantheon much later' (Bhandarkar 1913:148).

¹⁰⁵ YS I:11:285: *dūrvāsarsapakalpena dattvārghyaṃ pūrṇam añjaliṃ / pūrvamantrair eva vināyakasya janānīm upatiṣṭhet tato 'mbikām* // (A. K. Narain 1992:43).

¹⁰⁶ The seven goddesses implied in the *Gṛhya Sūtra* represent beauty and prosperity. It could be argued that the Saptamātrikās originated from these seven goddesses although the Seven Mothers are known for their evil character. Although a further investigation as to the development of these seven goddesses is beyond the scope of this thesis, it should be remembered that Vināyaka was depicted with the Saptamātrikās in the early stage of his

Yājñavalkya Smṛti provides a slight variation and includes six, instead of four, Vināyakas.¹⁰⁷ Their names are Mita, Sammita, Śāla, Kaṭankāṭa,¹⁰⁸ Kūṣmāṇḍa and Rājaputra. Rassat mentions that other texts such as the *Gopālatāpanīya Upaniṣad* refer to five Vināyakas (1954:28).¹⁰⁹

Although no contextual evidence is provided as to why the Vināyakas, along with other evil beings, are propitiated before the goddess, who is manifested in seven benevolent characteristics, and before the main deity, in this case the Sun, attention needs to be drawn to this particular order of worship. Did the appeasement of the Vināyakas and the goddess in the *Gr̥hya Sūtra* provide an early indication of Vināyaka's position as the 'Lord of Beginnings' or should this reference be considered circumstantial? His function as 'Lord of Beginnings' seems to have had a special significance at an early stage of his worship and his association with the goddess.¹¹⁰ The references to the Vināyakas in the *Mānava Gr̥hya Sūtra*, the elaborate *pūjā*, and the description of the symptoms of Vināyaka-possessed people, indicate well-established Vināyaka worship as early as the third century BCE. Whether or not the Vināyakas need to be considered as obstacle-creating personae cannot be answered for there is not sufficient evidence, although the hypothesis offered by Thapan should be taken into consideration. From the *Smṛti* of the beginning of the Common Era, it is clear that these four Vināyakas and their worship had evolved as their worship became linked to that of Ambikā and Śiva.

Besides embodying the function of Vināyaka as Creator of obstacles, Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa also acquired fame as the Leader of the Troops, that is, as Gaṇapati. The most common meaning of *gaṇa* is 'host' or 'group': this could refer to a group of gods, demi-gods, followers or attendants. V.S. Agarwala (1970:11) indicates that it can also refer to the followers of the teachers of various sects. Later the word *gaṇa* acquires a specific connotation denoting the troops, especially the demi-gods and demons, who form a part of Śiva's entourage. It is within this framework that the meaning of Gaṇapati or Gaṇeśa as the leader of the troops of Śiva occurs.

It has been argued by some scholars¹¹¹ that references to Gaṇapati as the elephant-headed deity are found as early as the *R̥gveda*: *R̥gveda* II:23:1¹¹² and *R̥gveda* X:112:9¹¹³ refer

iconography and therefore it might well be argued that the representation of Vināyaka and the Saptamātr̥kās actually goes back to the period of the *Mānava Gr̥hya Sūtra*.

¹⁰⁷ A translation of this text is included as an Appendix to this thesis.

¹⁰⁸ Rassat writes that Kaṭankāṭa is also a name for Śiva (1954:79). Apte (1924:327) gives several alternative meanings for the word: fire, gold, Gaṇeśa and Śiva.

¹⁰⁹ The fact that the *Gopālatāpanīya Upaniṣad*, a Vaiṣṇava text, mentions five Vināyakas is interesting because the later Pañca-Vināyaka worship is also based on five Vināyakas.

¹¹⁰ As is discussed later in this chapter, the association of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa with patron deities of trade suggests that the god was appeased at the beginning of the undertaking in order to remove the obstacles (Thapan 1997:152).

¹¹¹ Ramachandra Rao (1992:1) begins his first chapter with: 'The earliest references to Gaṇapati occur in two hymns of the *R̥gveda* collection'. According to him the first hymn, II:23, is still used in Gaṇeśa worship. The hymn was allegedly composed by a sage called Bhṛgu who composed no less than thirty-nine hymns in the *R̥gveda*. Rao contradicts his opening words when he later states that the two Vedic hymns do not refer to Gaṇeśa

to Gaṇapati. However, this theory is dismissed by a second group of scholars who claim that Gaṇapati in the Vedic verses was a reference to other Vedic deities. The first verse (II:23:1) is taken to be a reference to Bṛhaspati who is considered to be the patron of the hymn. Ramasubramaniam (1971:110) supports this theory by stating that the words *gaṇapati*, *kavīnām-kavi* and *jyeṣṭha-rāja* are indeed synonyms for Gaṇeśa but all the Vedic commentaries declare that this hymn was dedicated to the god Bṛhaspati, who was also considered 'Lord of the Hosts'. Rocher (1992:69), Courtright (1985:9) and many other scholars agree on this point. The second verse (X:112:9) is taken to refer to the god Indra (Rocher 1992:70; Ramasubramaniam 1971:110-111; Aravamutham 1949:226; Hazra 1948:263). Although the second explanation is the most likely, it should be noted that these Vedic hymns are used by the Gaṇapatyas to legitimise their account of the origin of their patron deity.

The *Anuśāsana Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata* provides the first link between the Vināyakas and the Gaṇeśvaras. The Gaṇeśvaras-Vināyakas are described as the 'Lords of all the worlds'.¹¹⁴ Because the exact number of Vināyakas is not mentioned, it would be merely speculative to suggest that the 'Lords of all the worlds' refers to the four Vināyakas in the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra*. The argument in favour of this possibility is the fact that these four might have been linked with the four directions which would therefore explain their function as 'Lords of the World'. Notwithstanding the limited references to the Vināyakas in the Epic,¹¹⁵ the reference in the later *Anuśāsana Parvan* clearly indicates that the Vināyakas have cast off some of their negative characteristics.¹¹⁶ The multiple number of the Vināyakas suggests that the composition of this Parvan probably took place before the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti*. In the *Mahābhārata*, names such as Gaṇādhipa, Gaṇakāra, Gaṇakṛt, Gaṇapati, Gaṇeśvara and Gaṇeśa occur but they are epithets of Śiva (Sorensen 1963).¹¹⁷

but to Bṛhaspati and Indra. In conclusion he writes that 'Gaṇapati of the classical age represents the composite imagery of all these Vedic deities: Bṛhaspati, Brāhmaṇaspati, Indra, Agni and Rudra' (1992:4). Rao's view on the Vedic origins of Gaṇeśa has been taken over by other scholars such as Aravamuthan (1966), Danielou (1954), and Sarkar (1969). An overview of the authors supporting the theory of Gaṇeśa's Vedic origins is given by Michael (1983).

¹¹² *Gaṇānaṃ tvā gaṇapatiṃ havāmahe kavīṃ kavīnām upamaśravastamam / jyeṣṭharājaṃ brahmaṇām brahmaṇaspati ā naḥ śṛṇvan nūtibhiḥ sīda sādānam* // (We invoke thee, O Gaṇapati of the troops, Bṛhaspati of the prayers, the most creative among the artists, abounding in treasure beyond measure, the most brilliant among the superior beings. Listen to our prayers, come with your blessings and assurances into our abode, and be seated) (translation according to Rao 1992:2).

¹¹³ *nī śu sīda gaṇapate gaṇeṣu, tvām āhur vipratamaṃ kavīnām* (Rocher 1992:70).

¹¹⁴ *Anuśāsana Parvan*, 150:25-28: *īśvarāḥ sarvalokānāṃ gaṇeśvaravināyakāḥ*.

¹¹⁵ Whereas the references to Vināyakas or Gaṇeśvaras in the *Mahābhārata* are few, the *Rāmāyaṇa* does not mention either. Sharma believes that, at the time of the composition of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Vināyaka worship was not yet established among the masses (Sharma 1975:4-5). However, the evidence from the *Mahābhārata* and the *Gṛhya Sūtra* suggests that there was a concept of an obstacle-creating entity.

¹¹⁶ Thapan (1997:99) has suggested that the *Anuśāsana Parvan* should probably be dated to around the second century CE, thus making it a little earlier than the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti*. This would explain why the Vināyakas are still referred to in the plural.

¹¹⁷ Sharma (1975:9) has suggested that the elephant-headed god may have been a popular deity among some tribes who were also known as *gaṇas* and who were led by *Gaṇapatīs*. In the *Mahābhārata* the word *gaṇa*, meaning 'clan', occurs frequently.

The introduction of the *Ādi Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata* which features Gaṇeśa as the scribe of Vyāsa, the composer of the *Mahābhārata*¹¹⁸ stands in sharp contrast to these few references in the epic to Vināyaka. Opinions concerning this passage are divided. Some scholars, Sharma amongst them,¹¹⁹ believe that this section was an integral part of the epic. However, the suggestion that Gaṇeśa featured in the *Mahābhārata* is contradicted by the findings of Winternitz who, after analysing the Grantha manuscript of the epic, comes to the conclusion that the story is a later interpolation (1898:147). Winternitz's conclusion is supported by the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata* in which the Gaṇeśa story is merely referred to in a footnote, thus indicating that it was a later addition (Rocher 1992:72). The fact that Al Birūnī noted that the *Mahābhārata* was written by the elephant-headed god (E. Sachau 1988:volume I:134) indicates that by the eleventh century the story had become an integral part of the *Mahābhārata* and that Gaṇeśa had become so important that an interpolation was made to connect him with one of the most important texts of Indian history.

It has been established so far that in ancient India the elephant enjoyed a sacred status and this led to the creation of an elephant deity in some parts of the subcontinent which can be regarded as a possible prototype of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa. However, the textual references to an elephant deity (Dantin) are isolated and do not contribute to the elucidation of the development of this prototype since all they have in common with the present Vināyaka is a single iconographical feature. Apart from this elephant deity, which is distinct from Gaṇeśa, there are early references in the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* which are very suggestive for the god's character as 'Creator of Obstacles'. The four Vināyakas described are evil and the text does not elucidate whether they are abstract concepts or real demons. The *Mahābhārata* connects the Vināyakas with the Gaṇeśvaras and the passage is also suggestive of their association with the four directions. The *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* references seem to represent their acceptance within the Brahmanic pantheon; the four are now associated with one Vināyaka who is appointed by Rudra and Brahmā as the 'Leader of the troops', a title which proves to be the logical conclusion of their connection with the Gaṇeśvaras in the *Mahābhārata*. However, the texts remain silent about the physical features of the Vināyaka. At this stage it is clear that all the ingredients for the creation of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa were present. Getty makes reference to three elephant-headed images, dated to about the first or second century CE, which she considers to be prototypes of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa. The first is a fragment from the Amaravati *stūpa* which Getty (1991:25) and Coomaraswamy (1971:30) believe is a transitional form of Gaṇeśa. However, a critical

¹¹⁸ The extract in question narrates how Vyāsa asked Brahmā to send him someone who would write down the *Bhārata* while he dictated it. Hearing the request of Vyāsa, Brahmā sent Gaṇeśa. Vyāsa then said that he should write the *Bhārata* down only when he understood the full meaning of the words, thus enabling him to reflect upon the text.

¹¹⁹ Sharma (1975:6) begins with a reference to this passage: The *Ādi Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata* not only indicates Gaṇeśa worship but it also throws light on one of his main aspects, i.e., 'God of Wisdom and the Lord of Learning', as it regards him as the writer of the *Mahābhārata*.

examination of the fragment fails to support this theory because it resembles a bull-headed figure rather than an elephant-headed one. A frieze depicting five elephant-headed *yakṣas* is considered by V. S. Agarwala (1963:106-107) as the earliest representation of a Gaṇeśa prototype in Mathuran art. P. K. Agarwala describes the figures as being *gajāśīrṣa yakṣas*. However, as Narain (1992:26) points out, this term does not appear in any of the *yakṣa* lists. A third disputed representation is the frieze of *gaṇas* in Mihintale (Sri Lanka). Paranavitana, who discovered the frieze, suggests a late date, but Getty (1991:25) is convinced they belong to the first centuries of the Common Era. While these isolated instances could be considered prototypes of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa, they are more likely to be elephant-headed *yakṣas*.

These elephant-headed *yakṣas* provoke a discussion in view of a group of Vināyaka statues excavated near Mathura. By dating these statues between the first and the third century, Dhavalikar (1992:51-52) defies the general belief that the first representations of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa appeared in the Gupta era, around 400 CE.¹²⁰ He believes that since the elephant-headed statues are carved in the round, they belong to the Kuṣāṇa period. A detailed description of these three Mathura statues is provided by Dhavalikar and need not be repeated here but it is interesting that these figures show the elephant-head with only one tusk and the trunk is coiled towards the left and touching the *modaka* bowl. These are specific features of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa's iconography and it is unlikely that they are also characteristics of elephant-headed *yakṣas*.

Thapan (1997:104-105) disputes Dhavalikar's findings, arguing that these statues must have been representations of the elephant deity that period, as has been suggested by the findings from Afghanistan, the references to Dantin in the *Mahābhārata*, and the interpolations in the *Yajurveda*. Her argument is supported by the fact that these three statues show a single tusk, the main feature of Dantin. If the suggestion made by Dhavalikar is taken seriously, then it is possible that the earliest representations of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa were sculpted according to the characteristics of the elephant-deity described in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Yajurveda*. As further indicative materials or texts are not available, it is impossible to state whether these Mathura statues represent the elephant deity, or whether they were indeed the earliest representations of Vināyaka.

There is no doubt that later statues dated *circa* the fifth century CE are Vināyakas. Two Afghan figures prove to be among the best examples attesting the various characteristics of Vināyaka. The earliest of the two is the statue of Sakar Dhar which is dated to the fourth century CE. Its iconographical features betray its creation in the transitional period between the Kuṣāṇa art and the Gupta school and reveal that the iconography of the elephant-headed deity

¹²⁰ Examples of these early statues have been found in the Madhyadeśa (the Sakisa mound in the Mathura region), in the caves of Udayagiri (Madhya Pradesh), Rajgir (Bihar) and Afghanistan.

was not yet standardised. Interesting are the two *gaṇa* attendants, indicating the link between Vināyaka and *gaṇas*. The other statue was found in the same region and is known as the 'Gaṇeśa of Gardez'. Both Dhavalikar and Agarwala have dated it to the late fifth or the early sixth century, whereas Sircar believes that it belongs to the seventh century CE (Sircar in E.I. XXXV, 1963-1964:44). The inscription on the base of the statue – 'This image of Mahā-Vināyaka was installed by Parama Bhaṭṭāraka Mahārājādhirāja Śāhi Khiṅgala, on the thirteenth day of the bright half of the month Jyeṣṭha in year eight' – makes it quite clear that the statue represents Vināyaka rather than a prototype. The reference to the king Śāhi proves to be more complicated and his identity is still being debated.¹²¹ The iconographic details of these two figures from Afghanistan are described by R. C. Agarwala (1968:166-168) and Dhavalikar (1992: 50-51) and do not need to be repeated here. The physical features of the statues show a strong Hellenistic influence, as can be seen in the Gandhara school, whereas the jewellery and the costume are inspired by the Magadha school of art. The tiger skin and the ithyphallic nature of these images suggest an association with Śiva.¹²²

While acknowledging the fact that Vināyaka had acquired a distinct iconographical form by the fifth century, the question still remains as to why he became associated with elephants and the elephant-headed deity. It can be argued that there were certain factors linking the Vināyakas of the texts with the sacred status of the elephant, but since there is no hard evidence to prove this point, the following interpretation is conjecture. One of the four Vināyakas of the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra*, Kūṣmāṇḍarājaputra, was associated with elephants through the character of Virūḍhaka, the leader of the Kūṣmāṇḍas, called the Lord of elephants.¹²³ The second early link between Vināyakas and the elephant is Virūpākṣa, the Lord of Nāgas, who forms part of the Vināyaka entourage. Thapan has shown that, although he was called the 'Lord of Nāgas', he was depicted as an elephant alongside Airāvata among the eight *diggajas*. The four Vināyakas may have been a reference to the four directions which would automatically have affiliated them with the elephants supporting the cosmos. This idea is supported by the later reference in the *Anuśāsana Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata* which mentions the Gaṇeśvaras-Vināyakas as the 'Lords of the Worlds' (Thapan 1997:98, footnote 85).¹²⁴ The *Yājñavalkya Smṛiti*, despite

¹²¹ Tucci identifies the king with Śāhi Khiṅgila of Khiṅgila of the Kashmir chronicle and of the coins which were issued by an early king bearing that name (Dhavalikar 1971:332; R. C. Agarwala 1968:166). Sircar on the other hand believes that Khiṅgala was a Śāhi ruler of Kapisa or Kabul.

¹²² Thapan suggests that, rather than an association with Śiva, these figures represent the syncretic form of the elephant deity and Śiva. The existence of an elephant deity in the Kapisa area has been discussed above. Thapan provides an excellent study of the origins of Śiva, dealing with the early literary references to the god and linking his cult to the worship of Mahiṣāsura. She also analyses Paśupati worship and the relationship between Śiva and animals such as the elephant, the buffalo and the tiger (1997:chapter 4). In conclusion (1997:119) she states that there is a connection between Śiva's association with the tiger, the elephant and the *liṅgam*.

¹²³ In the group of the fifty-six Vināyakas, the name of Kūṣmāṇḍarājaputra is still in use, although it is split in two. Kūṣmāṇḍa and Rājaputra are found on the second circle of Vināyakas. The present *mūrti* of Kūṣmāṇḍa is one of the oldest of the fifty-six. In the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, however, the association of Kūṣmāṇḍa with elephants has completely disappeared. Kūṣmāṇḍa is now venerated for warding off calamities and Rājaputra is, as the name suggests, important for kings.

¹²⁴ *Anuśāsana Parvan*, critical edition appendix 18:54.

reproducing parts of the *Vināyaka Kalpa* from the *Gṛhya Sūtra*, gives evidence of the rise in status of the Vināyakas to the point that they became linked with Ambikā and Rudra. In conclusion it is probable that this association with elephants and the existence of elephant-headed deities combined to provide a favourable context in which Vināyaka became the elephant-headed god *par excellence* and in which the Kuṣāṇa sculptors' images, regardless of what they might have been representations of originally, could be identified as Vināyaka.

Despite the fact that Vināyaka acquired his elephant characteristics in the late Kuṣāṇa and early Gupta periods, statues of that era depicting the deity alone are rare. In the ages following his emergence as an elephant-headed god, he usually appears together with other deities or in a subordinate position at the gate of the threshold. In his earliest representations with other deities he frequently accompanies the Sapta Mātṛkās or Seven Mothers and the Nava Grahas or Nine Planets. This is precisely what the *Vināyaka Śānti* would have led one to expect since it requires the worship of Vināyaka and the Grahas before worshipping Ambikā and the Sun (*Yājñavalkya Smṛti*, verses 293-294). Because a thorough study of the Mātṛkās¹²⁵ and the Nava Grahas is beyond the scope of this thesis, emphasis will be placed on their relationship with Vināyaka.

The earliest representation of Vināyaka and the Mātṛkās dates from the sixth century CE. In Deogarh in Uttar Pradesh two rock panels show Vināyaka as the last figure in the row. The Naharghati relief represents nine figures, all with haloes. The first figure is identified as Vīrabhadra or Śiva,¹²⁶ followed by the seven goddesses and finally Vināyaka, depicted with two arms (R. C. Agarwala 1971:85). The rock-cut Rājghāt relief shows an ithyphallic Vīrabhadra; Vināyaka is depicted with two arms and seated.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ For a more detailed study on the Mātṛkās, see Kinsley (1987), Kosambi (1962), Mishra (1989) and Sahai (1975). The earliest reference to them is found in the *Mahābhārata* and indicates that these goddesses originated from non-Vedic tradition (Kinsley 1987:155). These early descriptions can be dated to the first century and rarely specify their number. In later traditions their number is usually seven although there are representations of eight and even sixteen (Kinsley 1987:151; Mishra 1989:13). In the early period their names were not fixed either (B. Sahai 1975:218). It was only in the medieval period that their number and names became standardised. Despite their name 'Mothers' and the early representations of them with children on their lap, they were considered a danger to small children. As a result of their association with evil and the references to their non-Brahmanical origins in the *Mahābhārata*, one is inclined to conclude that they were originally *grāma-devatās* who were propitiated in the villages (Kinsley 1987:155; Kosambi 1962:19-20). In the post-Epic period (from 400 CE onwards) the Mātṛkās become increasingly popular in worship which resulted in the standardisation of their number and names, and the number seven itself became a synonym for the Mātṛkās.

¹²⁶ Originally Vīrabhadra was a *gaṇa* created by Rudra to destroy the foes of the devotees of Rudra. In the *Liṅga Purāṇa* (II:96:4-5) it is said that Vīrabhadra embodies the fury of fire. Another verse of the same Purāṇa (II:1:96:64-75) describes how Vīrabhadra took the form of Śarabha (half animal, half bird). Although these verses were composed at a later stage, they reflect the various associations of Śiva before the Common Era.

¹²⁷ Mishra (1989:14) has suggested that the representation of Vīrabhadra and Gaṇeśa at the beginning and the end of the panels replaces the *āyudha puruṣas*. The rock-cut panel of Pathari, however, only represents Vīrabhadra in association with the Mātṛkās. This panel is assigned to the fifth century which may indicate that there was no convention in that early period for depicting both Śiva and Gaṇeśa in the same panel.

From the early medieval period the association between Virabhadra, Vināyaka and the Mātṛkās became more prominent. Two panels from Jodhpur and Abaneri, dated to the early Pratihāra period (seventh century) shed more light on this (R. C. Agarwala 1957:111-114; O. P. Mishra 1989:18): it is clear from invocations to the Sapta Mātṛkās in their inscriptions and the numerous sculptures, that the Cālukyas of Badami were also mother-worshippers.¹²⁸ More statues of the divine Mothers and their two companions are also found in the cave temples of Ellora, in Orissa, in Madhya Pradesh and in Gujarat.¹²⁹ Several reasons could be given as to why Vināyaka obtained a place alongside the Mātṛkās. There are some similarities between the evolution of the elephant-headed god and the goddesses, and this is suggestive: both arose from obscurity, and both were originally feared for their negative qualities, the Vināyakas (and later Vināyaka) for their ability to create troubles, and the mother goddesses for being able to inflict diseases on children. Thapan mentions that, in the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* (II:14:30), seven goddesses personifying beauty, prosperity and other good qualities were invoked after the Vināyaka worship (1997:96), but she does not develop this any further. In the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* the worship of Vināyaka precedes that of Ambikā. Leaving aside the question of whether Ambikā should be regarded as his mother or not, it is required that all the worshippers of Vināyaka should also pay obeisance to her.¹³⁰ The affiliation between Vināyaka and the Mātṛkās witnessed in the panels probably stems from these literary sources. That the Vināyaka represented in the Mātṛkā panels was still not entirely accepted in the Brahmanical pantheon is suggested by his standing or dancing stance and the fact that he is depicted with only two arms. Banerjea (1984:40) argues that 'To depict the subsidiary position he [Vināyaka] was probably shown with two arms which exhibited that the figure was a demi-god whose admission in the Hindu pantheon was not yet completed'. The position of these panels varies but they never seem to occupy a prime position in the shrine, thus suggesting that the worship of the Saptamātṛkās and Vināyaka was subordinate to that of the main deity. In this context Vināyaka's attribute as 'Lord of the Threshold' may be considered since, in his position as an attendant alongside the Saptamātṛkās, he was propitiated before the main god of the temple. The suggestion that Vināyaka and Virabhadra were both representations of the *āyudha puruṣas*, who were considered to be some sort of *dvārapālas*, is also indicative of his status as the 'Lord of the Threshold'.

¹²⁸ Many of the temples around Badami contain panels depicting the Saptamātṛkās with Śiva and Gaṇeśa. One of these is the panel of Lakkandi in the temple of Kāśīviśveśvara where there is also a representation of the *vāhana* of each. For Gaṇeśa there is a rat under his throne (Getty 1991:27). Other reliefs of that period often depict Virabhadra and Gaṇeśa in a dancing pose.

¹²⁹ For further descriptions of the various Mātṛkā reliefs, see Getty (1991:27-31) and O. P. Mishra (1989); see B. Sahai (1975:60; 211-214) for the Mātṛkā panels in Orissa.

¹³⁰ In the *Gobhila Smṛti* (Kane 1968-74, volume IV:529, footnote 1184) there is a direct reference to the association, namely that all the rites should begin with an act of worship Gaṇeśa and the Mātṛkās.

Early representations of Vināyaka with other gods also include the Nava Graha panels, or the nine planets of Hindu cosmology.¹³¹ Getty describes a panel of Kankandighi where Vināyaka is standing at the right hand side of the Nava Grahas, wearing the high *jaṭā-mukutā* of Śiva and carrying a rosary and an axe. In the Orissan temples similar panels have been found on the doorways, whereas in the south of India they are in the veranda around the main shrine. Getty believes that such panels were put in the temples as a protection from evil and as an assurance of prosperity for the temple builders (1991:30; Redig 1996:47). The reason for associating Vināyaka with the Nine Planets might also be sought in the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* which prescribes the worship of the Grahas as one of the essentials after the Vināyaka worship (Thapan 1997:96). It can be argued from the iconographic evidence that the elephant-headed god had not yet risen above the status of a demi-god, similar to his subordinate position amongst the Matṛka; that is, he was more propitiated than worshipped. Both Vināyaka and the Grahas were able to place obstacles in the performance of worship; therefore their propitiation permitted the worship of the main deity to be successful.

The above account suggests that the creation and development of the elephant-headed Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa was the result of different factors. It can be argued that the material concerning the status of the elephant in South Asia, and the numismatic findings do not contribute much to the analysis of the fifty-six Vināyakas. However, in order to give a complete account of the god's evolution this material has been found valuable and necessary to comprehend the further evolution of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa. What is of interest here is that the theriomorphic deity of Afghanistan and the sacred elephants in early Indian art provided some of the necessary elements for the creation of Vināyaka's character. When analysing the group of the fifty-six Vināyakas in Chapters Four and Five it will be shown that the sacred elephant's association with water and the four cardinal directions plays a vital role. The chronological development of the character of Vināyaka also plays a vital role when dating the group of the fifty-six Vināyakas in Banaras. Although it would be premature at this stage to make predictions as to their date, it can be said that in their function the fifty-six Vināyakas still show some of the original characteristics of the Vināyakas.

The increasing prevalence of Vināyaka in iconography is reflected in Puranic literature. As Vināyaka was linked to the worship of Śiva, it is no surprise that the majority of the Gaṇeśa myths are found in the Śaivite tradition. The *Śiva*, *Līṅga*, *Skanda* and *Agni Purāṇas* contain several stories about the elephant-headed deity. Of the Purāṇas of the Vaiṣṇava tradition, Gaṇeśa appears in the *Varāha*, *Padma* and *Garuḍa Purāṇas*. In the Brahmanical tradition Gaṇeśa plays a role in the *Bhaviṣya*, *Brahma*, the *Brahmāṇḍa* and *Vāmana Purāṇas*. The *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* of the same tradition devotes a whole Khaṇḍa to him called the *Gaṇeśa*

¹³¹ These nine planets are: Sūrya, the sun; Candra, the moon; Aṅgāraka, Mars; Budhato, Mercury; Bṛhaspati, Jupiter; Śukra, Venus; Śani, Saturn; and then Rāhu and Ketu, the two demons of the eclipses.

Khaṇḍa which contains forty-six chapters. It was the Śaivite tradition which determined the character of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa in the Purāṇas. One of the earliest Puranic roles of Vināyaka is as the *gaṇapati* of Śiva. The *gaṇas* or troops were created by Śiva and were considered to be his entourage. Over the centuries other deities linked to Śiva worship became associated with these troops. This syncretism also took place in the case of the elephant and Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa. From the earliest time, the prototype of Śiva was associated with animals, the elephant amongst them.¹³² The *Śiva Purāṇa* (II:5:57) recounts how the elephant demon, Gajāśura, who was defeated by Śiva constantly wore an elephant skin (Courtright 1985:35). Thapan has noted that, in some contexts, the elephant associated with Śiva is characterised negatively as Gajāśura. In others, the elephant is venerated as a *gaṇa* of Śiva. Besides being appointed as the *gaṇapati* of Śiva because of his fierce character, Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa also develops a mild nature; namely, he acquires a childhood and thus functions as the intermediary between the austere Śiva and the devotee.¹³³ Even within the Puranic sources, the evolution of the character of Vināyaka is noticeable. The earliest Puranic references to the deity refer to him as Vināyaka, a fearful deity who is able to conquer demons.¹³⁴ Thereafter he is appointed by Śiva as his *gaṇapati*, leading the troops. The stories of Gaṇeśa as the son of Śiva should be regarded as recent because of the depiction of the elephant-headed deity as a fully-fledged member of the Brahmanic pantheon. The dating of the Purāṇas has proved to be an almost impossible task and so it is difficult to establish exactly when Gaṇeśa became associated with Śiva as his son. The early medieval period, around the seventh to eighth century CE, seems most likely.

The story recounting the glory of the fifty-six Vināyakas in Banaras could be regarded as an example of Gaṇeśa's link with Śiva. Despite the fact that the fifty-six are called Vināyakas, for a reason discussed later, they are all forms of Dhuṇḍhirāja which is an epithet of Gaṇeśa and who in the story is regarded as the son of Śiva. A further bond between Śiva and the Vināyakas is revealed by the fact that the fifty-six Vināyakas are housed in Śiva's city *par excellence*, Banaras, where they fulfil the function of protectors of the sacred territory.

The stories regarding Gaṇeśa's birth can be classified into three categories: myths narrating his parentage, those explaining his elephant head and explanations for his single tusk. They have been widely discussed by various scholars,¹³⁵ and therefore do not need to be

¹³² The oldest form of Śaivism appears to be Pāśupata Śaivism, describing the deity as 'Lord of the Animals'. This cult prevailed in the north-west and the west of India around the third century BCE.

¹³³ As a child, Gaṇeśa the elephant-headed god resembles the child Kṛṣṇa in character. Just as Kṛṣṇa became an outlet for the devotion of the masses, the child Gaṇeśa added a different dimension to Śiva worship. The ascetic Śiva was revealed as a loving father, approachable through his son's fun loving character. Whereas Viṣṇu and Śiva enjoyed royal patronage, it was the child incarnation of Viṣṇu and the son of Śiva who were immensely popular with the population at large (Thapan 1997:124).

¹³⁴ *Śiva Purāṇa* II:4:16 and II:5:21:13-18; *Varāha Purāṇa* I:23:20-29.

¹³⁵ Getty (1971), Courtright (1985), Shanti Lal Nagar (1992), S. S. Subramunyaswami (1996) and in various other works dealing with aspects of Gaṇeśa such as Heras (1954), Y. Krishnan (1992), Rocher (1992), and Shakuntala (1992).

repeated here. More germane to the current thesis than the mythology of Gaṇeśa in the Purāṇas is the considerable iconographic information that they provide.

The following chronological examination of the various relevant Puranic sources traces the evolution of Vināyaka's iconographic characteristics as well as his given names and epithets. This will also aid the dating of the fifty-six Vināyakas because his different attributes were expanded at different periods. In the introduction to Chapter Four further attention will be paid to the different period styles as some of the Vināyakas show peculiar features, some which have never been properly analysed by experts in Indian religious art.

The *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* (3:71:13-16) dated between 450 and 650 CE describes Vināyaka as elephant-faced, with a *śūla* and an *akṣamālā* in his right hands and a *paraśu* and *modaka pātra* in the left hands. He lacks the tusk on the left, has a *lambodara*, stiff ears and wears tiger-skin. He wears a *nāgayajñopavīta* and one foot rests on his seat. The *Matsya Purāṇa* (260:52-55), whose description of the god's iconography is ascribed to the sixth and seventh centuries CE, describes Vināyaka as elephant-faced, pot-bellied and with four arms. He wears a *nāgayajñopavīta*, has one tusk and has large ears. In his right hands he holds his tusk and an *utpala* and in his left hands the *modaka* bowl and a *paraśu*. He has a large face and muscular shoulders and his mount is a rat. He is also escorted by Ṛddhi and Buddhi. The *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* (*Brahma Parvan* 29:3-6), dated between the eighth and ninth centuries CE,¹³⁶ represents Vināyaka seated on a lotus throne, with four arms and three eyes. He is bedecked with jewels, has the moon on his head and wears a *nāgayajñopavīta*. His attributes are the tusk and the *akṣamālā* in his right hands and the *paraśu* and a *modaka* in his left hands. The *musala*, the *pāśa* and the *vajra* are also mentioned as attributes. The *Liṅga Purāṇa* (I:105:9-12)¹³⁷ refers to Gajānana¹³⁸ as the wielder of the *triśūla* and the *pāśa* and he is bedecked with ornaments. He also wears a *nāgayajñopavīta*. The *Padma Purāṇa* (62:2-8), generally dated between the ninth and tenth centuries CE, depicts Gaṇeśa as having a huge body, one tusk, a pot-belly and large eyes. He wears a girdle and the skin of the black antelope. He has a *nāgayajñopavīta*, a crescent moon on his head and rides a rat. He is elephant-faced, has charming ears and holds a *pāśa* and an *aṅkuśa*. Twelve names of the god are also mentioned: Gaṇapati, Vighnarāja, Lambatuṇḍa, Gajānana, Dvaimātura, Heramba, Ekadanta, Gaṇādhipa, Paśupāla and Bhavatanaya (61:31-32). The *Kailāsa Saṃhita* (7:14-16) of the *Śiva Purāṇa* (composed not earlier than 950 CE according to Hazra) (Rocher 1986:225) gives Gaṇeśa a red colour and a lotus seat. He has a huge body and is adorned with ornaments. His attributes are the *pāśa* and the *aṅkuśa* in the upper hands and the *danta* and a favourite object, which can be a *modaka*, in his lower hands. The *Agni*

¹³⁶ Hazra places this Purāṇa at the end of the eight century CE.

¹³⁷ The dates for this Purāṇa vary between the fifth and ninth centuries. Hazra even places it between 800 and 1000 CE. It is known from the work of Lakṣmīdhara that there was a version of the *Liṅga Purāṇa* which was lost and, based on the evidence of the *Kṛtyakalpataṛu*, must have predated the twelfth century.

¹³⁸ The name 'Gajānana' or 'Elephant Face' indicates the god's link with the elephant.

Purāṇa (71:1-12) generally considered to be composed around the ninth century CE,¹³⁹ describes Gaṇeśa as being elephant-faced with one tusk, a curved trunk, and, in his hands, carrying a *daṇḍa*, a *pāśa*, an *aṅkuśa* and a *modaka*. Verses six to seven give different names for Gaṇeśa: Gaṇapati, Gaṇādhipa, Gaṇeśa, Gaṇanāyaka, Gaṇakrīḍa, Vakratuṇḍa, Ekadaṁṣṭra, Mahodāra, Gajavaktra, Lambakukṣi, Vikāṭa, Vighnanāśana, Dhumravarṇa and Mahendra. The *Varāha Purāṇa* (23:17) mentions Gaṇeśa as being pot-bellied and wearing a *nāgayajñopavīta*. The dates ascribed to this *Purāṇa* range between the tenth and twelfth centuries CE (Rocher 1986:242). In the *Skanda Purāṇa* (I:1:11:5-11), composed between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, Gaṇeśa has five heads, three eyes and ten arms. The middle face is described as being of fair complexion. His ten attributes are: *pāśa*, *padma*, *paraśu*, *aṅkuśa*, *lāṅgala*, *musala*, *varada mudrā*, *danta*, *akṣamālā* and *modaka pātra*. He is seated in the *yogāsana* and has a moon crescent on his head. Part VII (I:38:46-47) provides a description of Mahāgaṇapati. The number of his tusks can vary: one, two or four. Further he is four-armed and has three eyes. He holds a *śūla* in one of his hands. His ears are conical and he is called 'the hero with the staff' or 'the leader of his army'. The *Nārada Purāṇa* (1:66:139) describes Gaṇeśa as being red in colour and having three eyes; he holds a *pāśa* and an *aṅkuśa* in the upper hands while his lower hands are in the *abhaya* and the *varada mudrā*. He is embraced by his consort who holds a lotus in her hand. Another verse of the same text (1:66:82) describes him as being seated with his consort and having four hands in which he holds the *pāśa*, the *aṅkuśa*, the *sūdhā pātra* and a *modaka*. Providing a date for this *Purāṇa* is difficult. Rocher, who has given an account of the various attempts to date this work, includes dates from as early as the ninth century to as late as the sixteenth and even seventeenth centuries CE. It thus appears that the work is a compilation of different smaller parts and its completed form is comparatively late' (Rocher 1986:203).

The *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa*, one of the two Upa-Purāṇas dedicated to Gaṇeśa, gives various descriptions of the deity's physical appearance. In the *Upāsanā Khaṇḍa* (12:33-38) he is described as having fingernails which are red like a lotus. His red dress is like the light of the sun and the moon adorns his head. He holds a *khadga* and a *kheṭaka*, a *dhanus* and has Śakti in his arms. He has only one tusk which is like *varāhadamaṁṣṭra* (the tusk of a boar). His eyes and crown are described as being beautiful. A more frightening picture is sketched in chapter forty-four (verses twenty-five to thirty). Here he has five faces and ten arms. He wears the moon on his forehead and has ornaments of serpents and a garland of skulls. In his four hands he carries weapons. This *Purāṇa* also gives the four different forms of Gaṇeśa in the four different yugas.¹⁴⁰ The other Upa-Purāṇa, the *Mudgala Purāṇa*, deals with nine aspects of Gaṇeśa (see

¹³⁹ Rocher (1986:137) summarises the various scholarly opinions concerning the date of the *Agni Purāṇa*. Although some scholars place the *Agni* before the ninth century and some after, because of the Tantric elements in the *Purāṇa*, the general consensus seems to be that the text originated in its present form around the ninth century CE.

¹⁴⁰ In the *kṛta yuga* he is called Vināyaka with ten arms and riding on a lion, whereas in the *treta yuga* he is Mayūreśvara with only six arms and riding a peacock. In the *dvāpara yuga* he is called Gajānana, has four arms, is

Appendix). Most of the iconographical details are in fact *dhyānas*. The *Mudgala Purāṇa* 1:4:16-18 describes him as four-armed, having a large body and an elephant face, together with a big belly. His ornaments consist of earrings, a crown and a garland of jewels. A snake adorns his navel and he wears anklets and *nūpurās*. On his chest is a *cintāmaṇi* and Siddhi and Buddhi are at either side. In another verse of the same Upa-Purāṇa he is addressed as Heramba, Ekadanta, Śūrpakarna and Dhuṇḍhi (7:8:13-17).¹⁴¹

Textual sources other than the Purāṇas, such as the Āgamas and the Śilpa Śāstras, also provide descriptions of the god's appearance. The *Ajitāgama* (*Kriyāśāde* 36:302-303) describes two forms of Gaṇeśa: Vināyaka and Virabhadra Gaṇeśa. The first is elephant-faced and three-eyed, he wears a *karaṇḍa mukuṭa* and holds an axe, a *pāśa*, a *danta* and a *laḍḍu*. Virabhadra Gaṇeśa is four-armed and three-eyed. He carries an iron *paraśu* and is seated in the *vīrāsana* or the *sukhāsana* position. The *Amarakośa* (I:1:38), a Śilpa Śāstra from north India, dated to the fifth or sixth century CE, merely describes the different names of the deity. This list of epithets provides evidence that, in the early stage of Vināyaka's existence, the name Gaṇeśa was not in use. The names used were: Ekadanta, Lambodara, Gajānana, Vināyaka, Vighnarāja, Dvaimātura and Gaṇādhīpa. The following verse (I:1:39) describes the god with one tusk, a *lambodara* and a *gajānana*. Despite the long list of the various epithets, it is unusual that there is no reference to the god's iconographic features. This might be explained by the fact that Vināyaka had only recently acquired his elephant characteristics and it is likely that there were no agreed conventions as to how to represent him. The *Aparājitaṭṭhā* (212:35-37), an important Śilpa Śāstra written between 1150 and 1250 CE,¹⁴² describes Gaṇapati as elephant-faced with three eyes and a human body (*puruṣarūpinam*). He is also *ekadanta*, wears a *vyālayajñopavīta*, and has a mouse as his vehicle; he holds one tusk in his right hand and has a *paraśu* in his upper right hand. The *utpala* (lotus) is in his upper left hand and in the fourth hand is the *modaka*.

Two important treatises of the fifteenth century deal with the iconography of Gaṇeśa. The first is the *Rūpamaṇḍana* which describes the iconography of Gaṇeśa, Heramba and Vakratuṇḍa. Gaṇeśa (5:15) is elephant-faced, he holds a *danta*, a *paraśu*, a lotus flower and sweetmeats in his hands and he is seated on a rat. Heramba (5:16-17) is five-faced and three-eyed. He also rides a rat.¹⁴³ The attributes of the right hand are the *varada mudrā*, the *aṅkuśa*,

red and his vehicle is the rat, and finally in the *kali yuga* he is known under the name of Dhūmraka, his vehicle is a horse, he has two arms and his colour is smoky grey.

¹⁴¹ *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, chapter fifty-seven mentions the fifty-six Vināyakas as the fifty-six different forms of Dhuṇḍhi Vināyaka. Amongst the group of the fifty-six there is a Vināyaka called Heramba and another called Ekadanta.

¹⁴² The *Aparājitaṭṭhā* is an important Śilpa Śāstra in the sense that it preserved the earlier tradition and it proved to be a guide for the later sculptures. It was composed just before the Muslims swept over the north of India and is considered to be the last major art manual of the classic period (Dubey 1987:295).

¹⁴³ Remarkable here is the fact that Heramba also rides a rat. Generally Heramba is said to have a lion as his vehicle.

the *danta*, a *paraśu* and the *abhaya mudrā*. In his left hand he has the *kapāla*, the *śara*, an *akṣamālā*, a *pāśa* and a *gada*. Vakratuṇḍa (5:18) is pot-bellied and has three eyes. His attributes include a *pāśa*, an *aṅkuśa*, the *varada mudrā* and the *abhaya mudrā*. His ears are said to be beautiful and decorated with ornaments. The second fifteenth-century work is the *Devatāmūrtiprakaraṇa* which describes no less than six different forms of Gaṇeśa. The first one is Gaṇeśa himself, elephant-faced and riding on a rat. His attributes are the *daṇḍa*, the *paraśu*, a lotus and the *modakas* (8:21). Heramba is described in two ways. One depicts him as having five faces and three eyes, riding on a rat and having ten arms with the following attributes: *varada mudrā*, *aṅkuśa*, *daṇḍa*, *paraśu*, *abhaya mudrā*, *kapāla*, *śara*, *akṣamālā*, *pāśa* and *gada* (8:22-23). The other description says he is vermilion red and has three eyes. His attributes are the *abhaya mudrā*, a *modaka*, a *ṭaṅka*, a *śara*, the *akṣamālā*, a *mudgara*, an *aṅkuśa* and a *triśūla* (8:27). Gaṇānana (8:24) is blood-coloured and elephant-faced, his attributes include the *ratna kumbha*, an *aṅkuśa*, a *paraśu* and a tusk. Vakratuṇḍa (8:25) is pot-bellied and three-eyed, he has long ears decorated with a *cāmara* (fly-whisk). In his hands he holds a *pāśa*, and an *aṅkuśa* in the upper hands and the lower hands are in the *varada* and the *abhaya mudrā*. Ucchiṣṭa Vināyaka is one of the Tantric forms of Gaṇeśa and one of the forms worshipped by the Gāṇapatyas. He is said to have three eyes and the rat as his vehicle. He wears a *nāgayajñopavīta*. He carries his own tusk and the *akṣamālā*, a *paraśu* and a *modaka* (8:26). Kṣipra Gaṇapati (8:28) is red and has three eyes; he wears the moon on his head and holds a *pāśa*, an *aṅkuśa*, a *kapāla* and his tusk.

The *Śilparatna* of the sixteenth century is a south Indian Śilpa Śāstra giving three forms of the god: Gaṇapati, Heramba and Vināyaka. Gaṇapati is described as having two eyes; Heramba is five-faced, pot-bellied, three-eyed and rides a lion. Vināyaka is *ekadanta*, has a *nāgayajñopavīta*, and is bedecked with jewellery and rides a rat. As will become clear from the iconographical study in Chapter Four, the most common attributes of the fifty-six Vināyakas are the *modaka* bowl, the *akṣamālā*, the *pāśa*, the *aṅkuśa*, the *padma* and the single tusk.¹⁴⁴

In addition to the iconographical characteristics mentioned above, a brief survey of the most common postures and attributes of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa is necessary here as it will contribute to the later iconographical analysis and dating of the fifty-six Vināyakas. There are three positions in which Gaṇeśa is depicted. The earliest is the standing pose, which suggests that in the early phase he had not yet acquired a fully divine status and that he functioned instead as a gatekeeper, standing outside the real threshold. Later images of the god in a standing position can be divided into four categories, depending on his stance. He can stand in the *samabhaṅga* position which means that he has his two feet together. Then there is the *ābhaṅga* position in which he is shown slightly bent, the *dvibhaṅga* posture depicts him as

¹⁴⁴ In the introduction to the different categories for the dating of the fifty-six Vināyakas, the meaning of the relevant attributes will be explained in detail: see Chapter Four.

twice-bent and in the *tribhaṅga* position he is thrice-bent. More common now are the representations of the god in the seated position. His seat may be a throne (*āsana*) or a lotus throne (*padmāsana*) and his vehicle the *muṣaka* or a lion.¹⁴⁵ When seated he is generally in the *lalitāsana*, a position which depicts him with his left leg folded and the right leg downwards. Besides these poses there are also statues of the god in a dancing stance.¹⁴⁶

One of the most characteristic features of Gaṇeśa is his elephant-head, although there are some examples of a Vināyaka with a human head¹⁴⁷ or with a boar's head. In general the god is represented with only one head; however, there are cases in which he is represented with two,¹⁴⁸ three, four or five heads. In his five-headed form he is known as Heramba. The *Rūpamaṇḍana*, referred to above, gives this as one of the main characteristics of Heramba-Gaṇapati. In the conceptual *maṇḍala* of the fifty-six Vināyakas we find examples of two-headed and four-headed Vināyakas. Although there is no stereotypical mode for representing the eyes, they are generally situated slantingly on the sloping surface of the face. From the tenth century onwards, images are found in Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, depicting Gaṇeśa with bulging eyes and raised eyebrows (W. Redig 1996:53). The forehead of the deity may be anointed with a *tilaka* or with a crescent moon. This latter decoration is taken from Śiva. In the more modern images (eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) this crescent moon is often made of silver. There are two categories of foreheads: one shows the god with a protruding forehead from which the trunk originates and another type depicts a flat forehead from which the trunk seems to jut out. Most images of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa maintain the anatomy of an elephant when it comes to the ears. Sometimes, he is represented with his ears close to his head; at other times his ears look like large wings or winnowing baskets. In the later images and in the statues from south India, the image is adorned with ornaments in his ears.

In the later Puranic myths we read how the deity lost one of his tusks. Most of the iconographic representations of the god are faithful to the mythology and represent Gaṇeśa with one tusk, whether left or right. In a few cases the god is depicted without any tusk. The *Narasimha Purāṇa* states that Gaṇeśa can have up to four tusks. In early representations, he is depicted with a thick and heavy trunk, a feature which goes back as far as the Gupta period (Redig 1996:52). From the earliest textual sources it is known that Gaṇeśa was perceived as *vakratuṇḍa* or 'The One with the Curved Trunk'. However, many modern statues of the god

¹⁴⁵ When Gaṇeśa is represented seated on a lion he is known as Heramba. This feature is typical for the Tantric representations of the god.

¹⁴⁶ Devangana Desai (1980:30-38) has devoted a whole article to the dancing Gaṇeśa, his positions and styles.

¹⁴⁷ See, for example, Shanti Lal Nagar 1992:77.

¹⁴⁸ There are hardly any textual sources supporting this peculiar characteristic of Gaṇeśa. However, these two-headed statues seem to have been quite popular in the Bombay region. Getty (1991:14) provides a reprint of a two-headed Gaṇeśa, called Gaṇeśa Jayanti. She also notes that Sir William Jones drew a close comparison between the Gaṇeśa Jayanti form and Janus, the two-headed god of the Romans (see the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1806:226).

show him with the trunk hanging straight down. There does not seem to be a standard rule as to which side the trunk should be coiled. In the earlier figures the trunk always turned towards the left side but later it also points to the right.

The early Kuṣāṇa and Mathura statues of the god show him bareheaded. In the Gupta period it was not uncommon for him to wear a lotus in his hair. It was only from the eighth century onwards that we see Gaṇeśa wearing various types of crown. Sometimes he wears the *jaṭā-mukuṭā*, a complicated arrangement of braided hair in chignon style, very common in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. In other sculptures he is seen wearing the *karaṇḍa-mukuṭā* (a crown-shaped, conical basket towering upwards) or the *ratna-mukuṭā* (a bejewelled crown). Gaṇeśa can wear any ornamentation, ranging from bracelets, ankle rings, necklaces or garlands. In India Gaṇeśa is depicted in general clad in a *dhoti* or in a tiger skin. The number and kind of attributes depends on the number of arms the god is depicted with. The first Gaṇeśa statues show him with two arms, his attributes at the time being any two of the following: a *modaka* bowl, a pomegranate, a *mūlaka*, a *danta*, a *paraśu* or a rosary. Almost all the figures hold a bowl with sweetmeats in their left hand while the trunk is touching them. When the god is depicted as a four-armed deity, his attributes include the *aṅkuśa*, the *pāśa*, a *musala*, a *triśūla* and sugarcane. Quite often he holds only three attributes while the fourth hand, the lower right, is in the *abhaya mudrā*. When he holds four attributes, the lotus and the *paraśu* are mainly portrayed in the rear hands while the bowl of *modakas* and the tusk appear in the front hands. In Tantric images, such as Mahā-Gaṇeśa, a female consort is seated on his lap and the god has one of his arms around her (Pal 1981:125). From the earliest sculptures onwards, Gaṇeśa is portrayed wearing a *yajñopavīta* or a sacred thread. However, in some illustrations it is a thread while in others it is clearly a *nāgayajñopavīta*, as is prescribed by the *Viṣṇudharmottara* (between 450 and 650 CE) and the *Śilparatna* (sixteenth century).

The aim of this treatment has been to provide a chronological survey of the evolution of the elephant-headed god, Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa, in both the literature and the iconography. One important question remains, however. The limited research into the reasons behind the deity's rise to power contrasts with the numerous studies attempting to explain his origins. It cannot be denied that, having acquired his elephant-head, Vināyaka's status improved.¹⁴⁹ However, by the eighth century, his worship was so widespread that it is too simplistic to argue that this was the result of Vināyaka having acquired an elephant-head, important though this must have been in terms of establishing identity and character. The recent study by Thapan (1997) provides an

¹⁴⁹ There is a clear discrepancy between the development of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa in India and in the rest of south-east Asia where the god never achieved the equivalent of his Indian status as one of its 'most popular deities'. Whereas by the time the god migrated, in the beginning of the sixth century CE, he had a dual character in India, his character in south east Asia and China remained that of a malevolent demi-god. For more detailed studies on Gaṇeśa worship in south-east Asia, China and Japan see Getty (1971), Brown (1992), Wilkinson (1992), Lancaster (1992) and Sanford (1992).

initial insight into some of the dynamics behind the acceleration of Vināyaka's rise to the status of a major deity. Together with an examination of the theory advanced by Thapan, what follows will seek to explain and elucidate Vināyaka-Gaṇapati's rise to prominence.

Thapan investigates Gaṇeśa's function as the 'Lord of Trade', a role which contributed greatly to the spread of his worship. Gaṇeśa assimilated some of the characteristics of Kubera who, besides being an important deity in both Buddhism and Brāhmanism was also related to Lakṣmī, the goddess of wealth. By investigating the characteristics of Kubera and Lakṣmī this account attempts to extend the theory by bringing in various new aspects of the relationship between Kubera, Lakṣmī and Gaṇeśa. The brief analysis of the characteristics of Kubera and Lakṣmī not only provides an insight into the accretion of the role of the 'Lord of Trade' by Gaṇeśa but also, and more importantly in the light of the study of the fifty-six Vināyakas, elucidates the other characteristics he borrows from Kubera and Lakṣmī.

The inhabitants of Vedic India lived as a tribal and agricultural society and this perhaps explains why there is no reference to a deity associated with trade in the Vedic literature. Alongside the development of society, the growth of towns and the establishment of new forms of government, trade and industry greatly expanded. From 300 BCE onwards, the first references to Kubera and Maṇibhadra,¹⁵⁰ both later associated with trade, are found. The earliest reference to Kubera is found in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, dated to the sixth century BCE, in which he is described as being the 'King of the Rākṣasas' (Eggeling 1963:367). Coomaraswamy understands this title to be an indication of Kubera's autochthonous character.¹⁵¹ However, the Bharhut *stūpa* of the second century BCE depicts Kubera (Kupiro Yakho) as the 'Lord of Yakṣas' (Coomaraswamy 1971:5; Banerjea 1941:275),¹⁵² thus indicating that the evolution from a malevolent being to a more elevated divinity had been completed by the second century BCE.

The character of Kubera is defined by his followers, the *yakṣas*,¹⁵³ who are regarded as guardians and gatekeepers, as well as the protectors of the wealth of the earth and fertility

¹⁵⁰ Thapan (1997) gives an extensive overview of the relationship between Maṇibhadra and trade.

¹⁵¹ According to Coomaraswamy this title indicates that Kubera was an aboriginal deity who was unknown to the Brahmanical orthodoxy (1971:5).

¹⁵² In the Bharhut representation, Kubera, here called 'Kupiro Yakho', is depicted with his hands in the *yoga* pose whereas many others around him are represented with folded hands as if to indicate their devotion to Kubera. There is evidence as early as the Mohenjo-Daro seals which possibly depicts gods in the *yoga* pose and devotees with their hands folded. According to Banerjea (1941:275), the folded hands was the only way to distinguish the devotees from the gods.

¹⁵³ The word *yakṣa* first appears in the *Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa* and means 'a wondrous thing'. However, later *yakṣas* became associated with *bhūtas*. They were connected with fertility worship and the earliest Buddhist representations of *yakṣas* depict them embracing trees. Although there are examples that some *yakṣas*, such as Maṇibhadra, were represented as 'normal' beings, the majority of the *yakṣas* are recognisable by their dwarfish figures and potbellies. These characteristics have led Coomaraswamy (1971:7) to state that 'Gaṇeśa is undoubtedly a *yakṣa* type'.

(Coomaraswamy 1971:7). Kubera is equally considered to be one of the four or eight guardians (*lokapāla*) of the world, protecting the northern direction. He is also worshipped as the god of productivity and wealth as attested by his epithets Dhānada and Vasuda. His city, known as Ālaka, situated on Mount Kailāśa, is renowned for its riches and splendour. A reference in the *Mahābhārata* (*Sabhā Parvan* 10:19) stating that Lakṣmī, the goddess of wealth, lives in Kubera's palace, suggests this association with wealth (see *supra*). A similar reference is found in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (5:6:14) which describes Lakṣmī as seated on the chariot of Kubera. Another reference to Kubera in this epic describes him as the 'Nidhīśa' or 'Lord of Treasures' (7:3:22). These treasures are eight in number and represent different aspects of material wealth and prosperity (Dhal 1978:92). Further evidence of Kubera's importance as the god of wealth is the *kalpa-vṛkṣa* (wishing tree) capital of a column found in Besnagar and dated to the third century BCE (Coomaraswamy 1971, volume II:72; Banerjea 1941:114). Between the roots of the tree are two moneybags overflowing with money. Banerjea argues that this column must have been originally located in front of a Kubera shrine. Gupta images representing Kubera holding a cup and a similar moneybag have been found in Rajasthan (R. C. Agarwala 1957:201-207). More indications of Kubera's connection with wealth and prosperity are suggested by his chief *yakṣa* Maṇibhadra who, with Kubera, is invoked as the patron of the merchants.¹⁵⁴

In addition to iconographical features and the links between fertility and the *yakṣas* as guardians of the earth's wealth, there is also a connection between the *yakṣas* and water. In the second part of his study of *yakṣas*, Coomaraswamy deals in detail with water cosmology. He argues that *yakṣas* are associated with water through the creation myth in which creation begins from the navel of the primordial man who rests upon the waters. From his navel a tree, from which everything originates, rises up. This primordial man is described as a *yakṣa* (Coomaraswamy 1971:25-26). Besides this myth there is also an unmistakable link between *yakṣas* and water through the fertility cult with which the *yakṣas* became associated early on. The *yakṣas'* links with water were transferred to Kubera who holds water symbols among his eight treasures.¹⁵⁵ It is these treasures which later, in the *Mārkaṇḍeya* and the *Garuḍa Purāṇa*, become known as the *padminī vidyā* of Lakṣmī. Evidence that these water symbols were associated with Kubera from early times is found in the Besnagar column which also shows

¹⁵⁴ A *yakṣa* statue of Pavāya (Coomaraswamy 1971:volume I:plate I.2; Thapan 1997:147) is probably a representation of Maṇibhadra *yakṣa*.

¹⁵⁵ These eight treasures are: *padma*, *mahāpadma*, *makara*, *kacchapa*, *mukunda*, *nanda*, *nīla* and *śaṅkha*. Coomaraswamy (1971:49, footnote 4) believes, however, that the *kharva* needs to be added as a ninth treasure. The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (68:8) and the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* (53:1-2) refer to these eight treasures as the *padminī vidyā* or 'the knowledge which gives all sorts of pleasures'. It is interesting that in these Puranic sources Lakṣmī is said to preside over these '*padminī vidyā*', thus reinforcing the link between Kubera and Lakṣmī. The *makara* can be described as a crocodile-like water animal with the head of a crocodile, horns, sharp teeth, four dog legs and a tail, at first that of a crocodile but, in later representations, a fish tail (Coomaraswamy 1971:48). The *makara* is the symbolic representation of the waters and the essence of water. Various *yakṣas* have the *makara* as their vehicle.

makaras and lotuses on the pillar (Banerjea 1941:114-115). These water symbols provide a direct link between Kubera and Lakṣmī.¹⁵⁶

As the *yakṣas* were also considered the guardians of the world, Kubera, as their king, became associated with the four cardinal directions and consequently he presides over the northern direction. Similar to the development of his function as a 'Yakṣarāja', Kubera was not considered 'Regent of the North' until the Mauryan period (third century BCE) during which he first seems to have been appointed as a directional deity in the Buddhist and Jain texts.¹⁵⁷ References to directional deities in the *Mahābhārata* show Kubera, together with Indra, as guardian of the east.¹⁵⁸ Bedeker considers that these references predate those describing Kubera as the directional deity of the north and that he acquired his enhanced status at a later stage in his career (Bedeker 1969-1970:436-437). During the Mauryan and the post-Mauryan period the cult and worship of the four Mahārājas or the 'Regents of the Quarters' became widespread, as is suggested by Pāṇini (between the fourth and the first century BCE) who refers to *bhakti* to the Mahārājas (Coomaraswamy 1971:volume I:27-28). But whereas Kubera was the regent of the northern direction, Gaṇeśa became the protector of the south (Courtright 1985:131). There is no textual explanation as to why Gaṇeśa presides over the southern direction. The south is traditionally linked to death and reincarnation and it therefore could be argued that Gaṇeśa, while adopting the directional aspect of Kubera, was given the south because of his association with Śiva, who of all the deities is most linked with death. From the textual references it seems that originally Kubera's function as the guardian deity of the north was inferior to his role as the protector of wealth. However, today he is mainly known as the regent of the north, since Lakṣmī and Gaṇeśa have taken over his function as the gods of wealth and good fortune. This observation is also made by Coomaraswamy (1971:36) who states that the deities of the four quarters, although accepted in the Brahmanical pantheon, lost their significance in the sectarian traditions in which they merely function as the guardians of the world¹⁵⁹ and are referred to only at the end of edicts.

At this point it is necessary to return to Lakṣmī and her relationship with Kubera, because, as will become apparent, while Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa's link with trade and wealth should

¹⁵⁶ There are no literary sources connecting Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa to water. However, when investigating the group of the fifty-six Vināyakas, it becomes clear that most of the Vināyakas were, and still are, stationed near a water source, be it a pond, a well or the Ganga. This feature will be examined further in Chapter Five.

¹⁵⁷ The first reference to the deities of the four quarters is found in the *Yajurveda* (I:8:7) where Agni presides over the east, Yama over the south, Savitṛ over the west and Varuṇa over the north. (Coomaraswamy 1971:volume II:31). The *Śaḍaviṃśa* and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* present Agni in the east, Yama in the south, Varuṇa in the west and Soma in the north.

¹⁵⁸ In the *Kaṇva Parvan* (8:30:76-77) Soma is the presiding deity of the northern direction (Bedeker 1969-1970:437). Another passage (3:106:5) describes Indra and Vaiśravaṇa (Kubera) as the protectors of the eastern direction.

¹⁵⁹ Today the eight *lokapālas* or guardians of the world are: Kubera in the north, Soma in the north-east, Indra in the east, Agni in the south-east, Yama in the south, Sūrya in the south-west, Varuṇa in the west and Vāyu in the north-west (Frédéric 1987:678).

be considered as the direct result of the assimilation of Kubera's characteristics, the triangular relation between Kubera, Lakṣmī and Gaṇeśa further developed this aspect. It is in the context of this relationship that the character of Lakṣmī needs to be examined.¹⁶⁰ Here the concentration is on Lakṣmī's associations with Kubera and Gaṇeśa, her representations as Gaja-Lakṣmī, and the relationship with elder sister Jyeṣṭhā, also known as Alakṣmī.

From the earliest textual references to Śrī-Lakṣmī, it is clear that her association with wealth and good fortune were already established. In the *Śrī Sūkta*, the earliest hymn in praise of the goddess, she is invoked for bringing prosperity and fame, cattle, horses and food. She is also worshipped for keeping the evil powers of her elder sister Alakṣmī at bay. The hymn also associates the goddess with fertility as she is described as 'moist' (*mantra* thirteen), 'perceptible through the odour in the harvest' (*mantra* nine) and 'dwelling in cow dung' (*mantra* nine). It needs to be pointed out that in the *Śrī Sūkta*, Śrī and Lakṣmī are two distinct goddesses. Śrī is invoked for mental and material welfare, Lakṣmī for material welfare only. While the *Śrī Sūkta* established her link with fertility, the goddess consequently became associated with other fertility symbols such as elephants and the lotus flower, resulting in representations of Śrī-Lakṣmī flanked by elephants or sitting on a lotus. It can be argued however, that, although there is a reference in the *Śrī Sūkta* which invokes Śrī to bring abundance and prosperity, it was her direct association with fertility and agriculture which led her to become the goddess of wealth and prosperity in the agrarian society of ancient India. Because of the common link with the rains Lakṣmī and the elephants were strongly affiliated, thus creating the image of Gaja-Lakṣmī. The early Gaja-Lakṣmī representations were later supported by Puranic materials which are adaptations of the original myth of the churning of the ocean. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1:9:103) tells of how, when the goddess had risen out of the ocean, she was sprinkled by the elephants of the four quarters with water from the Ganga and the other sacred rivers (Dhal 1978:102). The links between the elephants and Lakṣmī continue in recent iconography of the goddess where she is depicted between the elephants although, instead of being showered with water, she is often showered with gold coins. The evolution of the Gaja-Lakṣmī representations reflects the development of the goddess from a deity connected with fertility worship to the goddess of wealth. It can be argued, however, that the concept of wealth was indirectly linked with agricultural success. Later depictions of the motif show the goddess flanked by attendants which have been identified as *yakṣas*, thus suggesting an association with Kubera (Thaplyal 1970:112). That the goddess of wealth became affiliated to trade is attested by coins dated to the second century BCE which represent a goddess holding a lotus flower in her hand. On the reverse of these coins are elephants with riders holding goads (Thapan 1997:151). The elephant goad is one of the symbols of the merchant classes.¹⁶¹ Although there is no specific inscription

¹⁶⁰ For a detailed study of Lakṣmī's origins and development in Hinduism, see Kinsley (1987) and Dhal (1978).

¹⁶¹ In the later iconography Gaṇeśa is also depicted with a goad, thus establishing the fact that he too was linked with the trading community (Thapan 1997:151).

establishing the identity of Lakṣmī, the standing goddess figure and the elephants on the reverse side leave no doubt that these coins, used by traders, represent the goddess of wealth.

The second aspect in the symbolism of elephants in the Gaja-Lakṣmī portrayals is the prestige and royalty they represent. Some scholars have argued that the Gaja-Lakṣmī representations actually depict royal consecrations, thus explaining the term *abhiṣekha-lakṣmī* which is sometimes used instead of Gaja-Lakṣmī (Banerjea 1941:164-165). During the *abhiṣekha* ritual the king was showered by elephants (Kinsley 1987:22, with reference to Gonda 1969:7-8).

Because Kubera and Lakṣmī are both associated with wealth and trade, an obvious reason for their affiliation is their common roots in fertility worship. Kubera, being the 'Yakṣarāja', presides over an entourage of *yakṣas* who are considered to be the guardians of the earth's wealth and thus of its fertility. Early representations of *yakṣas* and *yakṣīs* show them entwined around trees, thus suggesting a vegetative connection.¹⁶² References to Lakṣmī as a *yakṣī* are found on the *stūpa* of Bharhut (second century BCE) where the names of both Kubera and Lakṣmī are mentioned.¹⁶³ Another indication of Lakṣmī's links with *yakṣa* worship is found in the *Sirikālakannī Jātaka* which names Lakṣmī as the daughter of Dhataratṭa who is mentioned as a *yakṣa* in Bharhut (Dhal 1978:91). Although the elephant is the most common attendant of Lakṣmī, *yakṣas* also feature in the early representations of the goddess. A pillar found in Lala Bhagat (Uttar Pradesh), dated to roughly the second century BCE, shows a Lakṣmī figure flanked by a pilaster emerging from a pot which is held by a *yakṣa* type (Banerjea 1941:117). Similarly, seals depicting Gaja-Lakṣmī sometimes feature two attendants who throw coins from a money bag placed in front of them. The money bag and the fact that the attendants are *yakṣas* establishes two connections between Gaja-Lakṣmī and Kubera. A contemporary indication of Lakṣmī's association with Kubera lies in the Divālī *pūjā*. During the night of Divālī, commonly referred to as *yakṣarātri*, Kubera is worshipped after sunset. This *pūjā* is the most important one for the merchants, who then close their old accounts and open their new ones (Dhal 1978:179-180).

In the Epics the relation between Kubera and Lakṣmī is further emphasised. In the *Mahābhārata* (2:10:18) she lives in the palace of Kubera, and in verse 3:164:13 she is further associated with him. Whereas the Epics do not explicitly state that she is his wife, the *Nārada Purāṇa* does refer to her as the wife of Kubera.¹⁶⁴ Because the general belief is that this *Purāṇa*

¹⁶² Coomaraswamy (1971) has included ample examples of *yakṣas* and *yakṣīs* holding on to trees and branches. The examples include panels from the *stūpas* of Bharhut, Sanchi, Bodhgaya and Amaravati.

¹⁶³ Lakṣmī is referred to as 'Yakhi' (Coomaraswamy 1971:5).

¹⁶⁴ The *Nārada Purāṇa* is generally considered to be a late work. Wilson argues that the text could be dated to the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries CE. Hazra, however, believes that some sections were composed between 875 and 1000 CE while others are described as 'relatively late' (Rocher 1986:203).

is of late origin, however, this is more suggestive than conclusive (Dhal 1978:91). References in the *Mārkaṇḍeya* and *Garuḍa Purāṇas* further suggest an affiliation between Kubera and Lakṣmī. The two texts describe in detail the *padminī vidyā* or the 'Knowledge which brings about Pleasure', a collection of treasures (*nidhis*) representing the different aspects of material wealth. Earlier it was stated that Kubera is the Lord of these eight treasures (Coomaraswamy 1971:volume II:49, footnote 4; Dhal 1978:92). However, in Puranic sources these eight *nidhis* are the basis for the *padminī vidyā* whose presiding deity is Lakṣmī (Banerjea 1941:211). Despite the fact that there is enough textual and iconographical material suggesting a relationship between Kubera and Lakṣmī, there is no early iconographic evidence which depicts them together.¹⁶⁵ It has therefore been argued by Bloch that this relation should be regarded as purely hypothetical (Banerjea 1941:210). However, some Gupta images depicting Gaṇeśa together with Kubera and Lakṣmī not only confirm the triangular relationship between Gaṇeśa, Kubera and Lakṣmī, but also undermine Bloch's argument (V. S. Agarwala 1949:150-151).

There is a further factor which needs to be taken into account: the worship of Jyeṣṭhā or Alakṣmī. Although the worship of Jyeṣṭhā is less developed than that of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa, one finds parallels between the two deities, not only in their malevolent origins but also in their appearance. By way of illustrating a development similar to that of Vināyaka and because of the close links with the Lakṣmī worship, the cult of Jyeṣṭhā is further elucidated here.

The cult of Alakṣmī is very old and developed parallel to Śrī-Lakṣmī worship. The *Atharva Veda* (7:115:1) refers to two aspects of Śrī-Lakṣmī, one is the benevolent aspect called Puṇyā and the other is Pāpī Lakṣmī, the evil-doer. The identity of Pāpī Lakṣmī only developed after Śrī-Lakṣmī had become distinctly identified. The early *mantras* in the *Atharva Veda* describe Pāpī Lakṣmī as the one who can ward off the evil forces of the demoness Nirṛti (Dhal 1978:130-131). Later references to Pāpī Lakṣmī show that she became identified with the evil Nirṛti herself. Her power to bring misfortune and misery is suggested by a reference in the *Śrī Sūkta* in which Pāpī Lakṣmī is called Alakṣmī and is considered to be the elder sister of Lakṣmī who brings about misery and misfortune. In the mantras her blessing is sought and the *Śrī Sūkta* was regarded as a means of warding her off. By the time of the Brāhmaṇas they were established as sisters since both were said to have originated from the head of Prajāpati (*Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* 2:1:2:2). The *Liṅga Purāṇa* states that Alakṣmī was created first by Viṣṇu, and that he created Lakṣmī afterwards. The *Rāmāyaṇa* (1:44) explains that Jyeṣṭhā was also created when the gods churned the ocean but when she rose to the surface they decided to send her to sit in inauspicious places. A study by Kirfel concerning the Puranic *pañcalakṣaṇa* has

¹⁶⁵ V. S. Agarwala, referring to a couple of images in the Mathura museum, is of the opinion that Kubera and Lakṣmī are often depicted together. Coomaraswamy (1971:volume II:4), however, contradicts this argument by pointing out that these images are in fact representations of Kubera as Pañcīkī and Haritī, the Buddhist goddess of smallpox. In Buddhist legends Haritī became closely associated with Lakṣmī, hence the confusion.

shown that none of the 'ur-texts' of the churning of the ocean refer to Alakṣmī. It therefore has been suggested by Kirfel and Dhal that Alakṣmī only rose to fame when she was linked to Lakṣmī, who had by that time become a major deity (Dhal 1978:137). The fact that in the creation myths Alakṣmī is always said to have been created first gave her the epithet Jyeṣṭhā. The *Baudhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra*, generally dated between the sixth and the third centuries BCE, describes her worship in the *Jyeṣṭhā Kalpa*. She is described as being *hastimukhā* (3:9:4), her epithets include *kumbhī*, which refers to the forehead of an elephant, *varadā* and *vighnapārsadā* or 'associated with obstacles' (Leslie 1991:115; Dhal 1978:145). The *Suprabhedāgama* mentions her as being *gajānanā* or 'elephant-faced' (Leslie 1991:115). Other textual references to iconographical characteristics do not explicitly mention elephant features. In the *Aṃśumadbhedāgama* she has a long nose and big cheeks, a large belly and pendulous breasts. Her skin is black or dark (Dhal 1978:159; T. A. G. Rao 1981:volume I:393). Leslie (1991:113) mentions that images of the goddess in south India indicate that she enjoyed some popularity in the seventh and eighth centuries but that the cult had apparently died out by the tenth century CE.

The resemblance between Jyeṣṭhā and Vināyaka is striking. Both are characterised initially as evil demons and are said to be *hastimukha*. In addition, Jyeṣṭhā is also linked with obstacles as one of her epithets is *vighnapārsadā* (Srivastava 1972:165-170). Although she apparently enjoyed reasonable veneration as an evil goddess, she suddenly disappeared around the tenth century—or did she? In this context it might be useful to draw attention to another goddess who shares iconographical features with Jyeṣṭhā, namely Vaināyakī. Since there is little published on Vaināyakī, the following discussion is merely an attempt to explain the common characteristics between Jyeṣṭhā and Vaināyakī. The earliest mention of the goddess Vaināyakī is found in the *Matsya Purāṇa* in which she is described as 'belonging to Vināyaka'. This Puranic source, which has been dated to around 550 CE by Mundkur (1975:293), does not refer to her iconographical features, thus making it difficult to state whether she was represented with an elephant-head. The reference implies that because she belonged to Vināyaka, she may have been his *śakti*. A Bengali version of the *Padma Purāṇa* (between 600 and 1100 CE) mentions a goddess Vighneśā who is probably the *śakti* of Vighneśvara or Vināyaka. However, no early Puranic source provides evidence of Gaṇeśa's link with a female consort. The earliest attested material pointing to this is found in the *Agni Purāṇa*,¹⁶⁶ compiled around the tenth century. But the text indicates that the association of Gaṇeśa with female consorts was purely conceptual as there is no reference to the iconographical features of any of the *śaktis*. This is supported by the fact that these *śaktis* do not appear in the list of sixty-four Yoginīs of the same Purāṇa.

¹⁶⁶ In the chapter describing the Gāṇapatya ritual, the female divinities are invoked after the prayers to the god and they are seated in a group of eight circled around the throne of the ninth. This list of nine *śaktis*, however, does not list Vaināyakī amongst them (Mundkur 1975:293).

When examining the iconographic representations of this goddess it is noticeable that, apart from a first century terracotta plaque found in Rairh (Rajasthan),¹⁶⁷ there is no material evidence until approximately the tenth century. Since Mundkur (1975) and B. N. Sharma (1970; 1972) have studied these later representations of Vaināyakī, there is no need to review the material here. The appearance of the Vaināyakī statues in north India runs parallel with the disappearance of the worship of Jyeṣṭhā who was also described as *hastimukhā*. From the previous discussion regarding Jyeṣṭhā's characteristics, it is known that besides the elephant-face she is also supposed to have had sagging cheeks, pendulous breasts and a potbelly. However, pictures of her statues published by Rao show her as a normal goddess with an elephant head and a slight belly, not as the ugly creature she is supposed to be. Because the iconographic material on Jyeṣṭhā and Vaināyakī is scarce, it would be premature to reach any conclusions but it is possible to argue that Jyeṣṭhā and Vaināyakī originally developed as two different goddesses, Jyeṣṭhā being associated with Lakṣmī worship and being described as elephant-headed, thus connecting her iconographically with Vināyaka. Except for being associated through iconography and function (*Vighnapārsadā*) with Vināyaka she was never linked with the god, neither was she ever considered his *śakti*. Vaināyakī on the other hand seems to have been a *śakti* of Gaṇeśa for much of her early existence and texts referring to her in this way do not even suggest elephantine features. However, with the decline of Jyeṣṭhā worship around the tenth century, Vaināyakī, as the unidentifiable consort of Vināyaka, may well have taken over the goddess' iconographical characteristics. Because of her links with Gaṇeśa, the assimilation of features would not have created a problem.

The previous discussion dealing with Kubera and Lakṣmī serves to explain the dynamics behind Gaṇeśa's elevation as one of the major Brahmanic deities. The Gupta period representations of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa with Kubera and Lakṣmī provide evidence for the beginning of his association with these two deities of wealth. Since Mathura was a flourishing trade centre with a large concentration of Jaina merchants, it has been suggested by Thapan that these early sculptures were Jain (1997:152). She further argues that at this stage Vināyaka was not yet associated with trade but was merely invoked to remove obstacles. Her findings are based on a seventh-century inscription from the Jaipur area.¹⁶⁸ It was the merchant community who began the practice of invoking Vināyaka at the onset of any undertaking. Thapan (1997:152, footnote 40) provides a short overview of the practice of invocations in the eight and ninth centuries, which leads her to conclude that even in the ninth century Vināyaka-

¹⁶⁷ This plaque is described by both Mundkur (1975:292) and Cohen (1992:118) but, whereas Mundkur merely provides a description, Cohen adds that the significance and the identity of this plaque are not clear and that it is therefore doubtful whether this is really a representation of a goddess with an elephant head.

¹⁶⁸ The Sakrai Stone Inscription (642-643 CE) records the construction of a *maṇḍapa* for the goddess Śaṅkarā by eleven bankers. In the invocation three gods are called upon: Gaṇapati, Caṇḍikā and Dhānada. The invocation to Gaṇapati asks him to remove the obstacles, Caṇḍikā is asked to bestow prosperity and Dhānada is asked for protection (Thapan 1997:152).

Gaṇeśa was not yet systematically invoked first. Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa's association with trade first seems to have occurred in Rajasthan in the ninth century. The Ghatiyala inscription of the Jodhpur Pratihāra Kakkuka (861-862 CE) gives evidence of the establishment of a marketplace where a pillar topped with a quadruple Vināyaka image was placed (R. C. Agarwala 1963:235-236; P. K. Agarwala 1977(b):152).¹⁶⁹ The inscription invokes Vināyaka alone and from the context it becomes clear that Vināyaka was believed to ensure material welfare in the region. The four Vināyakas, depicted back to back, represent the four cardinal directions. Whether or not this quadruple image supports the theory that the four Vināyakas mentioned in the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* also represent the directions is not clear since this statue is the only one of its kind and is of a much later date than the *Gṛhya Sūtra*. However, this peculiar representation suggests that the deity had some affiliation with the four directions, probably through his association with Kubera, the Regent of the North. The suggestion of Vināyaka's affiliation with the four directions in the Pratihāra region will later prove to be significant as the fifty-six Vināyakas are said to be located in seven circles, eight Vināyakas in each direction. Thapan believes that Kakkuka constructed such a pillar for Vināyaka because of the economic power of the Jain community in the region. However, as discussed in Chapter One, the Pratihāra rulers demonstrated an interest in other religions by constructing temples and shrines for Jains as well as for Hindus. Another interesting aspect of the Ghatiyala pillar is that the inscription is sponsored by the Maga Brahmins, who were originally associated with Sun worship.¹⁷⁰ A later inscription (960 CE) from the same region indicates the importance of Vināyaka in the trading community. This inscription gives evidence of taxes being used for the maintenance of a temple and a Vināyaka shrine. The grant is made by a certain Mathanadeva, who claims to belong to the Pratihāra dynasty, but it is more likely that this Mathanadeva was a vassal of the Pratihāra king of Kanauj.

Vināyaka's association with trade and the Jain community in Rajasthan supports the theory that the deity's real rise to prominence was linked to his relationship with trade and to his assimilation of Kubera's characteristics as one of the patron gods of trade. Kubera, and Maṇibhadra were *yakṣas* who were traditionally regarded as the guardians of wealth and fertility. Vināyaka, however, is a much more complex character. His *yakṣa* appearance enabled him to be linked with Kubera and Maṇibhadra and gave him his original status as a demi-god. Although his body affiliated him to Kubera, his elephant-head lent him the status of an elephant, regarded as a sacred animal, symbolising the rains, fertility and wealth in the iconography of Lakṣmī. Apart from being associated with fertility, his elephant character also

¹⁶⁹ The text of the inscription relates that the area had been made unsafe by the Abhira clan. Kakkuka had conquered the area and had established marketplaces in Rohimsaka and Maddodara, after which he populated the area with people of different castes (E.I. IX no 38:277-281).

¹⁷⁰ The Magas were originally foreigners who had links with the Sun worship. In the early centuries they were regarded with suspicion but the Ghatiyala inscription shows that by the ninth century they had acquired sufficient status to be employed by the ruling dynasty of the area (Thapan 1997:154).

provides a necessary link with the directional deities, who were represented as elephants in early Buddhism and Brāhmanism, and provide a more specific link with Kubera in his directional aspect.

Although it was suggested earlier that the assimilation of the elephant-head and the *yakṣa* body took place in the Mathura region, itself an important centre of trade, the deity's relationship with trade was probably developed further west, in Gujarat and Rajasthan. Both Kubera and Maṇibhadra occupied an important position in Jain beliefs as both were associated with trade. Since the Jains are mainly traders, the worship of Kubera, Maṇibhadra and Lakṣmī comes as no surprise. Both Kubera and Maṇibhadra have an elephant as a *vāhana* and Lakṣmī is represented being blessed by two elephants. The elephant association of these three gods probably ensured the acceptance of Vināyaka into the Jain pantheon. As is indicated in the seventh-century inscription, the early invocations to Vināyaka-Gaṇapati do not yet link him with trade but regard him as the 'Remover of Obstacles'. Gradually, however, Vināyaka assimilated Kubera's characteristics as the deity of wealth and it can be argued that the rise of Vināyaka and the decline of Kubera's status in north India are linked. There are several reasons for turning towards Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa as a replacement for Kubera: both share the *yakṣa* connection and as an elephant-headed deity Vināyaka's identity is automatically intertwined with the symbolism represented by the elephants, both in ancient Indian art and mythology and in the Gaja-Lakṣmī symbolism. Further, Vināyaka became patronised by the Jain merchant community thereby providing further impetus to the deity's rise to prominence. Vināyaka's association with wealth and trade is eventually reflected in the Purāṇas and in the iconographic representations of the god which depict him with an elephant goad, the emblem *par excellence* of the trading caste.

Thapan mainly focuses on the god's relationship with the trading community of the Jains and his assimilation of Kubera's identity as the 'god of trade', thereby neglecting the other characteristic Vināyaka took over from Kubera, namely his association with the four directions. Kubera was known as 'Regent of the North', although Gaṇeśa is known as 'Protector of the Southern Region'. Closely linked to the directional characteristic is the fact that Gaṇeśa is considered to be the 'Lord of the Threshold', protecting the gates and doorways of sacred as well as secular places. Although Kubera never exercised this function explicitly, since he was considered the Yakṣarāja, it was inherent in his nature since the *yakṣas* were regarded as protectors and guardians. Apart from Puranic references to Gaṇeśa as a directional guardian, the ninth-century Ghatiyala column shows four Vināyaka figures protecting the four directions. This column should be considered as evidence of the transmission of Kubera's qualities to Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa, as the inscription on the column states that the structure was erected by a Pratihāra king in order to give protection to the merchants, thus alluding to Vināyaka's association with both prosperity and the directions.

Although no supporting evidence has been found so far, the identification of the elephant-headed *yakṣa* with Vināyaka might also have been determined by Lakṣmī's relationship with her elder sister Jyeṣṭhā who is described as *hastimukhā* and *vighnapārsadā*. Although her worship never reached great proportions, she was linked with Lakṣmī until the tenth century and invocations to her guaranteed a successful Lakṣmī *pūjā*, thus providing another indication to her similarity with Vināyaka in his early stage as *vighnakartā*. Gaṇeśa provided the means to continue Lakṣmī's links with an elephant-headed deity, while at the same time the character of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa would have been able to suppress Jyeṣṭhā. The association of Gaṇeśa with Lakṣmī is further evidenced by the joint worship of Gaṇeśa and Lakṣmī in Divālī, by both Hindus and Jains (Laidlaw 1995:chapter 17).

A final indication of the transfer of Kubera's characteristics to Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa is Ṛddhi who in the *Mahābhārata* is considered to be one of the wives of Kubera and who today is considered to be one of the two consorts of Gaṇeśa. Cohen (1992:123), who interviewed numerous Hindus about the wives of Gaṇeśa, came to the conclusion that, mainly in Uttar Pradesh, Gaṇeśa is regarded as being married to Ṛddhi and Siddhi: that this is a more widely held belief is confirmed by Laidlaw's study of contemporary Jains in Rajasthan (1995:371).

Although the adoption of Kubera's and Lakṣmī's characteristics appear to have been the primary influence in Vināyaka's rise to prominence, another significant factor in promoting Vināyaka as a major deity is the rise of the Gāṇapatya sect and their consequent influence on the *pañcopāsana pūjā*. There has been little research on this sect,¹⁷¹ and scholars who have investigated the Gāṇapatyas have all based their theories on a medieval text, the *Śaṅkaravijaya* of Ānandagiri.¹⁷² This work suggests that by the tenth century, the Gāṇapatyas, who were divided into six separate sub-sects,¹⁷³ were an established group in Indian society. Why Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa became the object of sectarian worship still remains unanswered but it may have been the result of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa's inclusion within the *pañcopāsana pūjā* which probably developed under the Pratihāras. The Smārta Gāṇapatyas appear to have been the driving force behind the two Gaṇeśa Upa-Purāṇas. From the contents of the *Mudgala* and the

¹⁷¹ The Gāṇapatya sects were first mentioned by Bhandarkar (1913:147-150) and Getty (1971:20). Later studies include Rassat (1954:66-83), Courtright (1985:217-226) and Thapan (1997). Research on some of the sub-sects has been done by Bühnemann (1988; 1989).

¹⁷² Courtright (1985:218) briefly explains the content of the *Śaṅkaravijaya* as a hagiographic text which celebrates the debate of Śaṅkara with various religious and philosophical opponents. The six groups of Gāṇapatyas are mentioned, each with their own iconographic representations of Gaṇeśa and their rituals.

¹⁷³ The six sects of the Gāṇapatyas are: Haridra, Mahāgaṇapati, Saṁtāna, Navanīta, Svārṇa and Ucchiṣṭa and Heramba Gāṇapatyas. The last two sects seem to be considered as one group since both are of the Tantric school. Each of these sects worshipped Gaṇeśa under a different name, with a different *mantra* and in a different form. The Gāṇapatyas all had the symbol of Gaṇeśa branded on their arms and foreheads.

Gaṇeśa Purāṇas it appears that the Smārta Gāṇapatyas were prominent in Banaras,¹⁷⁴ Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The assimilation of Kubera's and Lakṣmī's features as well as the appearance of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa among other major deities of Brāhmanism in the beginning of the tenth century established him as an independent and significant god in Hinduism.

In conclusion it will be helpful to summarise what is a complicated and sometimes dense account. The creation and development of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa was the outcome of the convergence of several major elements. The first and most visible element is the elephant. The prestigious status of the elephant from the period of the Indus civilisation is an established fact. In early Buddhism the elephant acquired a sacred status through its links with the Buddha's birth and the Jātaka stories. Elephants also received a place in cosmology as the *diggajas* or the 'guardians of the world', thus associating them with the four cardinal directions. The prestige of the elephant in Buddhism was matched by the evolution of its image in the Vedic and Brahmanic creed. Indra's vehicle Airāvata was an elephant linked with the rain clouds. It was the connection with rain and water which made the elephant an obvious symbol of fertility. Numismatic material dated to the second century BCE and found in Afghanistan provides the first representation of the elephant as a probable deity. A second element in the development of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa is to be found in the association with Lakṣmī and Kubera. Lakṣmī, from the earliest times the goddess of wealth and fertility, became associated with elephants from the second century BCE, a link which is attested by the Gaja-Lakṣmī representations. As the goddess of wealth she also became linked with Kubera who had risen to the status of 'Treasurer of the Gods' and was considered the patron deity of the merchant classes. It was in this capacity that Kubera, together with his chief general Maṇibhadra, was adopted and worshipped by the Jains, attested by the various Pratihāra remains.

Taking these first two elements, the elephant and the significance of Lakṣmī and Kubera, into account, it is easy to understand the rise of an elephant-headed deity with the body of a *yakṣa* who was the guarantor of good fortune and wealth. However, Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa is also associated with darker forces. The earliest Hindu reference to a Vināyaka appears in the *Mānava Gr̥hya Sūtra* in which the Vināyakas, four in number, possess the ability to bewitch people and are to be propitiated by an elaborate *pūjā*. Although the text is a *Vināyaka Śānti* it indicates the beginning of one of Vināyaka's most characteristic features, that is, the requirement that he be propitiated before the goddess, who in the text is associated with seven good qualities, and before the Sun. This early link between the Vināyakas and the goddess may

¹⁷⁴ In the following chapter it will be seen that parts of the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa* were believed to have been written in Banaras. The approximate date of this *Purāṇa* is still a much debated subject, but it can be argued that the parts referring to Banaras were composed at a late stage, maybe even as late as the eighteenth century. Although there is no doubt that the Gāṇapatyas were active in the religious life of the city, there is so far no single indication that they were the driving force behind the establishment of the group of the fifty-six Vināyakas.

well have been the reason behind their representation in Saptamātrkā panels. The text of the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* is also suggestive of Vināyaka as the 'Lord of Beginnings'. The parallelism between the propitiation of Vināyaka before approaching the goddess for good fortune and the worship of the elephant-headed Jyeṣṭhā-Alakṣmī prior to Lakṣmī *pūjā* is so striking that it might also be suggestive of causation, especially as Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa now replaces Jyeṣṭhā-Alakṣmī in the Divālī rituals. Although the *Gṛhya Sūtra* does not refer to the physical characteristics of Vināyaka, there are some indications that there may have been some association with the four directions. The later *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* provides evidence of the evolution of the four Vināyakas into one Vināyaka who was appointed by Rudra and Brahmā as the Gaṇapati and who was clearly associated with Ambikā. A fourth and last element which needs to be taken into account is the Śiva connection. The *Vināyaka Kalpas* of both the *Gṛhya Sūtra* and the *Smṛti* belong to the school of the *Black Yajurveda*, the school which was primary responsible for the adoration and cultivation of Śiva. In a later Parvan of the *Mahābhārata* the Vināyakas are linked with the *gaṇas* as they are described as Gaṇeśvaras-Vināyakas who are considered the 'Lords of the Worlds'. The association with Śiva is fully elaborated mythologically in the Purāṇas and the deity evolves from being a 'Gaṇapati' or 'Leader of the troops' of Śiva to Gaṇeśa, the son of Śiva.

While there is no difficulty in imagining the creation of an elephant-headed deity as a composite of the symbolism of the elephant with the characteristics of the *yakṣas*, it is more difficult to see how the fun-loving Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa of today originated from the evil-spirited Vināyakas. So far no evidence has been found as to why these Vināyakas are represented with an elephant's head. Although there is a visible increase in their status around the beginning of the Common Era, the association of Vināyakas and elephants based on the relationship between Kūṣmāṇḍarājaputra and Virūdhaka and the four Vināyakas as representations of the four *diggajas*, is suggestive though not compelling. A reference in the *Mahābhārata* and three elephant-headed *yakṣa* statues from Mathura, all dated between the first and the third century CE, provide evidence of the existence of a deity with an elephant's head, but there is no way of determining whether this was Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa or not. These images were produced during the Kuṣāṇa period in the Mathura region. Whether the Kuṣāṇa artists simply produced an elephant-headed *yakṣa* which the Brahmins of the Black Yajurvedic school chose to identify with Vināyaka, or whether they produced this image as a deliberate representation of Vināyaka will never be known. The brilliant success of the association of Vināyaka with an elephant-headed *yakṣa*, however, is attested by history.

Once Vināyaka acquired his elephant's head and a striking visual identity, his rise to prominence was ensured. From the Gupta period onwards the number of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa statues, together with the Mātrkāś or the Nava Grahas, gradually increased and he became a prominent deity in the Brahmanic pantheon. In the *pañcopāsana pūjā* he became one of the five

main deities. The reason behind his elevation, it has been argued, was his connections with Kubera, the 'Lord of Wealth' in Śaivism and Jainism. Although further research on this topic is needed, there are sufficient indications that the Jain community supported the god's acceleration through his affiliation with Kubera and Lakṣmī. The Gāṇapatya sect developed a Tantric aspect to Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa worship. In his Tantric form the deity spread over the whole of India and abroad, although the first appearance of the god in south-east Asia and China occurred as early as the middle of the sixth century. In south-east Asia and in China, Vināyaka never acquired the benevolent character he developed in India.

The chronological survey of the different Purāṇas, Āgamas and Śilpa Śāstras and the numerous sculptures of the god in India provides evidence of the continual elaboration of the character and attributes of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa. Today Vināyaka has become the name least used and the deity is mainly invoked as Gaṇeśa or Gaṇapati. His appeal is enormous: he is the 'Lord of Beginnings', the 'Lord of Obstacles', the 'Protector of the Southern Region', the 'Guarantor of Success, Good Fortune and Wealth'. Students invoke him at the beginning of their exams and merchants pray to him when starting a new account year. Because of his association with trade and wealth, he also is invoked with Lakṣmī during the annual Divālī *pūjā*. His image decorates every Hindu household and every doorway as he is also celebrated as the 'Guardian of the Threshold'.

CHAPTER THREE

Sources for the Study of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa in Banaras

This chapter analyses the various iconographic and literary sources, relevant to the worship of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa in Banaras.¹⁷⁵ It is a necessary preliminary to the investigation of the fifty-six Vināyakas which are described for the first time in chapter fifty-seven of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. The description of the fifty-six Vināyakas in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* of the *Skanda Purāṇa* is placed within the context of the story of Divodāsa, described in Chapter One. This chapter therefore begins with a chronological analysis of the versions of this story in earlier Purāṇas, providing not only a background for the later *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* story, but also casting light on the evolution of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa in these stories, and thereby further clarifying the role of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*.

This is followed by an investigation of Pañca-Vināyaka worship, the earliest evidence for which is found in Banaras. The twelfth century *Kṛtyakalpataru* is then considered both for information concerning Pañca-Vināyaka worship and also to provide a picture of the religious situation in Banaras during the Gāhaḍavāla period. The central element of this chapter, however, is an analysis of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. The Māhātmya has proved to be problematic to date and therefore a brief discussion of the various possible dates precedes the analysis of the contents of the Khaṇḍa. Finally, various other relevant Nibandhas and Māhātmyas which follow the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* are discussed.

The earliest references to the myth of Divodāsa are found in the *Brahmāṇḍa*, the *Vāyu* and the *Harivaṃśa Purāṇas*. These three Puranic sources are mentioned together because their versions of the myth hardly differ from each other. In addition, scholarly consensus accepts that the *Brahmāṇḍa* and the *Vāyu* were originally one Purāṇa and that they were separated to establish two independent works (Rocher 1986:157; Hazra 1940:18; Pargiter 1922:23, 77). Hazra (1940:13) writes 'The *Vāyu* is perhaps the oldest of the extant Purāṇas' thus suggesting that the *Brahmāṇḍa* originated from the *Vāyu Purāṇa*. In the *Vāyu Purāṇa* veneration for Śiva is emphasised and the Purāṇa describes how a number of 'folk' deities were brought under the umbrella of Śaivism. Dikshitar claims that the *Vāyu* was compiled between 350 BCE and 500 CE (1951:55) but most scholars investigating the dates of the Purāṇas prefer the later date. For example, Farquhar (1920:145) considers the fourth or fifth centuries CE as an approximate

¹⁷⁵ Eck (1980; 1993) gives a detailed account of the textual sources for the study of Banaras.

date, which is also supported by Winternitz (1963:485). Kane (1962:907) places the compilation between 350 and 550 CE. The dates suggested for the *Brahmāṇḍa* differ. The earliest date is again proposed by Dikshitar (1951:55) who dates it to the fourth century BCE. Kane (1962:895-896) places it between 400 and 600 CE. It is Hazra's contention (1940:18) that, based on the dynastic accounts given in both Purāṇas, the separation of the two took place after 325 CE and probably no earlier than 400 CE.¹⁷⁶

The version of the story in the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* (2:3:67:30-72) can be summarised as follows.

The saintly king Divodāsa lived in the flourishing city called Varanasi (31). This was at the time Maheśvara (Śiva) married Pārvatī. After their marriage Śiva's mother-in-law urged her son-in-law to find a suitable place for her daughter (32-37). Śiva decided to take up residence on earth and he heard about the city of Varanasi, which was occupied by Divodāsa (38-40). He called his Lord of the Gaṇas, Nikumbha, and told him to evacuate Varanasi by non-violent means (41a-41b). Nikumbha appeared in the dream of the Brahmin Maṅkana and told him to install an image on the outskirts of the city. With the permission of the king, Maṅkana installed the statue (42-44a). The Lord of the Gaṇas was worshipped every day and he granted thousands of boons to the citizens of Varanasi. The queen, wanting a son, also prayed to Nikumbha but her wish was not heard (44b-50). The king became very angry and decided to destroy the statue of Nikumbha, after which Nikumbha cursed the king (51-55). Nikumbha said: 'Despite my faultless presence in your city you have destroyed my shrine. Now your city shall become a deserted wasteland!' (56). After the curse Varanasi became empty and Nikumbha brought Śiva and Pārvatī to the city (57).¹⁷⁷

In this myth Nikumbha is represented as the 'Lord of the Gaṇas' although the king calls him a *bhūta*, thereby suggesting that he embodies evil characteristics.

In the earlier *Vāyu Purāṇa* (92:27-55) the story is identical except that Nikumbha reveals himself not to a Brahmin but to a barber. Both are named Maṅkana. In India barbers belong to the lower social classes but they are important in marriage ceremonies and in the death rituals in which they are responsible for washing the corpse before it is cremated. The reference to the barber in the *Vāyu Purāṇa* is possibly an indication that the 'Lord of Gaṇas' was propitiated by the lower orders of the population. Either the 'Lord of the Gaṇas' had risen in status in the period between the compilation of the *Vāyu Purāṇa* and the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, or he was favoured for some other reason within the milieu which produced the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*. From these two versions it is clear that Divodāsa was forced to leave the city due to a curse put on him by a *gaṇa*.

¹⁷⁶ The cause for the separation was most probably sectarian because the orientation of the *Brahmāṇḍa* is Vaiṣṇavite whereas the orientation of the *Vāyu* is clearly more Śaivite.

¹⁷⁷ *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, AITM volume 24, part III:853-855.

The *Harivaṃśa* and the *Brahma Purāṇa*, which follow these two Purāṇas chronologically, perceive King Divodāsa differently; he is no longer the protector of *dharma* but an evil-minded king. The *Harivaṃśa* or the 'Genealogy of Hari' is a poem of epic proportions. It consists of sixteen thousand *śloka*s and is considered to be a supplement to the *Mahābhārata*. This work is dated to the fifth century CE. The *Harivaṃśa* version (Appendix 1, no. 7, 57-140) of the story is summarised by Doniger (1976:190) as follows.

'Divodāsa was a famous king of Benares. At this time, a *rākṣasa* named Kṣemaka entered the empty city, for it had formerly been cursed by Gaṇeśa to become empty for a thousand years, and for the duration of that curse Divodāsa lived in the charming city on the Gomatī, on the border of the kingdom. [The sages ask: How could Gaṇeśa who is the very soul of *dharma*, curse a holy place? The bard continues:]

'King Divodāsa lived in the city of Benares. Now, at this time Śiva married Satī and lived with his in-laws, but his mother-in-law, Mena, said to Satī, "Your husband does not behave properly in my presence. He is very poor and does nothing but sport with you." Satī begged Śiva to take her to his own home, and so Śiva looked over all the worlds and chose Benares as a pleasant place to live. But when he saw that Divodāsa was living there, Śiva summoned Gaṇeśa and said: "Go to the city of Benares and empty it. Use gentle wiles, for the king is very mighty." Gaṇeśa established a shrine in the city and the chief queen of Divodāsa worshipped there and asked for a son again and again. But Gaṇeśa did not give her sons, thinking, "If the king becomes angry at us, I will achieve my purposes". After a long time, the king did become angry at Gaṇeśa for failing to give him a son, and the evil-minded king foolishly destroyed the shrine of Gaṇeśa, whom he reviled as an 'evil-minded, gluttonous maker of obstacles'. Then Gaṇeśa said to the king, "Since you have destroyed my shrine when I had not offended you, your city will become empty". And so Benares became empty, and Śiva came and dwelt there with Satī'.

In this version it is the identity of Gaṇeśa which needs to be scrutinised. Although it could be argued that the reference to Gaṇeśa refers to the elephant-headed god, the investigation of the names of the god in the previous chapter indicates that, in the fifth century, the elephant-headed god was known by the names of Vināyaka and Gaṇapati. Thus the reference above could mean that either the story in the *Harivaṃśa* should be dated later than the fifth century, or that 'Gaṇeśa' is not the elephant-headed god but is a title given to an important *gaṇa* in Śiva's entourage. The latter explanation seems to be the more likely one.

The story in chapter eleven of the *Brahma Purāṇa* is similar to the version of the *Harivaṃśa*. The *Brahma Purāṇa*, consisting of two hundred and forty-five chapters, occurs first

in the list of the eighteen Mahā-Purāṇas, hence the name *Ādi Purāṇa*. Most scholars agree that the present *Brahma Purāṇa* is a composite of various segments belonging to different periods. Hazra (1940:145-146) further claims that the present *Brahma Purāṇa* was originally an Upa-Purāṇa of the same title, written as late as the sixteenth century CE. Hazra (1940:149-150) also provides an analysis of all the passages which the *Brahma Purāṇa* has in common with the *Harivaṃśa*. Based on this he argues that the apocryphal *Brahma Purāṇa* is indebted to the *Harivaṃśa*, suggesting that because the *Harivaṃśa* preceded its composition, the apocryphal *Brahma Purāṇa* was not compiled earlier than the tenth century.

The version of the story in the *Brahma Purāṇa*¹⁷⁸ is further confused. It recounts how Divodāsa, the son of Bhīmaratha, lived on the outskirts of Varanasi because at that time the city was uninhabited due to a curse put upon it by Nikumbha. Only the *rākṣasa* Kṣemaka lived in the city.¹⁷⁹ The city of Varanasi had originally belonged to Bhadrasena but he had been killed by Divodāsa who had destroyed all Bhadrasena's one hundred sons except the youngest, Durdama. This Durdama fought Divodāsa and won back his heritage. The Purāṇa then introduces the character of Alarka, who is the king of Kāśī, and who is truthful in speech and favourable to the Brahmins. Towards the end of his life, he slays the *rākṣasa* Kṣemaka and lives again in the beautiful city of Varanasi. Alarka's successor is King Kṣemaka. Söhnen and Schreiner suggest that the sentence in which the *rākṣasa* Kṣemaka is killed refers to King Divodāsa (1989:28-29). Despite the confusion concerning the different characters, their genealogy and their deeds, it is clear from the text that Divodāsa is not a righteous king in this chapter. The character of Nikumbha is not properly explained but the fact that he cursed Divodāsa and expelled him from the city suggests that he was a malevolent being. Kṣemaka is described as both a *rākṣasa* and as the successor-king to Alarka. The similarities between the *Brahma Purāṇa* version and that of the *Harivaṃśa* lies in the character of Divodāsa who is an evil king in both stories. Because of his misdeeds he is banned from his city and lives on the bank of the Gomti river. Whereas in the *Harivaṃśa* it is Gaṇeśa as the 'Lord of the Gaṇas' who pronounces the curse to expel Divodāsa, in the *Brahma Purāṇa* it is Nikumbha. If one considers the name Gaṇeśa as being the name of the 'Lord of the Gaṇas', the use of the name Gaṇeśa in the *Harivaṃśa* could in fact refer to Nikumbha, who was part of a *gaṇa* of Śiva.

Doniger (1976:174-204) offers an interesting interpretation of the Divodāsa myth, linking it to the triumph of Śaivism over Buddhism. The dubious character of Divodāsa in the

¹⁷⁸ *Brahma Purāṇa*, AITM volume 33: chapter 11.

¹⁷⁹ In connection with the appearance of the *rākṣasas*, Pargiter's view (1922:291) is interesting. He suggests that the reference to the *rākṣasa* Kṣemaka's occupancy of the city could indicate that the country was so devastated by the war that it was taken over by 'uncivilised' tribes from the forests (1922:263). The Haihayas were known to have raided the north of India. He also makes reference to the term *rākṣasa* in the *Rāmāyaṇa* in which it denotes the inhabitants of Ceylon and the Godavari valley. Pargiter concludes that enemies were generally turned into savages in the later recensions of the myths, the differences between the various kinds of evil beings having been transcended and the single noun *rākṣasa* being used.

Harivaṃśa and the *Brahma Purāṇa* seems to have been borrowed from references to the king in the *R̥gveda*, where he is known as 'Destroyer of Cities', and in the *Mahābhārata*, where Divodāsa is the king who took away the sacrificial fires from a city (Doniger 1976:191). The Epic provides a story similar to the one in the *Brahma Purāṇa*: 'After his father destroyed the city, Divodāsa became the king of Varanasi.¹⁸⁰ He rebuilt it and made it prosperous. Then the city was attacked by the Haihayas and Divodāsa suffered great losses and sought refuge in a hermitage. The resident sage there performed a sacrifice which gave Divodāsa a son, Pratardana. Having come of age, Pratardana returned to the city and killed all the Haihaya princes' (*Mahābhārata* 13:31:15-55, as quoted by Doniger 1976:91). According to Doniger (1976:174-204) this story applies to Divodāsa characteristic attributes of a Buddhist *avatāra*. The king makes the city wealthy and prosperous, thus competing with the gods, but, by taking revenge on his enemies, he transgresses his *dharma*. Varanasi is a likely city for such an interpretation because it is the city of Śiva situated near Sarnath, a sacred centre for Buddhists.

In this context it is legitimate to anticipate the later *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* to find further support for Doniger's association of Divodāsa with Buddhism. When Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa is sent to Banaras he takes over the role of Nikumbha and Kṣemaka in the earlier Purāṇas by deluding the people of Varanasi, and thereby preparing the way for Viṣṇu to persuade Divodāsa to stand down. Gaṇeśa, in the form of a Buddhist astrologer, uses his *māyā* to affect the dreams of the people which he then explains to them in terms of a dreadful future. In their dreams the people see a frightful man clad in ochre robes. According to Kane (1968, volume I:187) this could be interpreted as an allusion to Buddhist monks. The first reference to a man in ochre robes appears in the *Vināyaka Śānti* of the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* where it is a hallucination created by the Vināyakas (see Appendix, page 3). The character of Divodāsa who, if one accepts Doniger's arguments, is associated with Buddhism in the *Harivaṃśa* and the *Brahma Purāṇa* is further developed in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* where he is no longer regarded as evil-minded but as a virtuous king, living by the rules of the Buddhist *dharma*. It is Gaṇeśa's role-playing as the Buddhist astrologer and the nightmares of the population of Varanasi that carry the connotation of the evil nature of Buddhism in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, thus allowing Divodāsa to be restored to virtue. It is interesting that the *māyā* of Gaṇeśa includes many of the spells which were put on people by Vināyakas in the *Gṛhya Sūtra*.

Although the *Matsya Purāṇa* does not give any account of the Vināyaka cult in Banaras, it is a valuable source for an early perspective on the religious life of the city. Chapters one hundred and eighty to one hundred and eighty-five of this Purāṇa form one of the best known short Māhātmyas on Kāśī and it describes the *yakṣa* cult in the myth of *yakṣa* Harikeśa (see *infra*) (Rocher 1986:198). The story about Kāśī, here only referred to as Avimukta, is narrated

¹⁸⁰ According to the story, the city was situated between the north bank of the Ganga and the south bank of the Gomti.

by Śiva and Pārvatī. The reason why this Purāṇa is of importance here will become clear from the analysis of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. If the chapter on Banaras in this Purāṇa is not considered to be later than the eleventh century then it seems that in this period Avimukta was the presiding deity of the city. This provides textual support for the seals excavated in Rajghat which show that, between the eighth and the twelfth centuries, Avimukta was the presiding deity.

The last Purāṇa which needs to be considered is the *Padma Purāṇa*. It also has numerous references to the sacred border of Kāśī in its *Pātāla Khaṇḍa*. The *Padma Purāṇa* is one of the more extensive Purāṇas, existing in two different recensions: a Bengali one in five Khaṇḍas and a western version in six Khaṇḍas. It is generally accepted that the Bengali version is the older of the two (Rocher 1986:206-207; Hazra 1940:107-108). Although this Purāṇa does not provide much information about the Vināyaka cult in Banaras, it does mention the site of Dehalī Vināyaka at the western gate of Kāśī. There is a *Pātāla Khaṇḍa* in both the western and the Bengali version but neither of the two contains the Māhātmya on Kāśī, in which Śiva's superiority is claimed (Rocher 1986:210). Scholars are agreed that this is one of the latest Purāṇas. The *Padma Purāṇa* has been dated between 1200 and 1400 CE by Doniger, but Hazra has suggested that some segments may be as old as the tenth century. If Hazra is right and if the reference to Dehalī Vināyaka does belong to the tenth century, then this would be indicative of an early date for the emergence of Dehalī Vināyaka in the religious life of the city. Since the present *mūrti* of Dehalī Vināyaka is recent this would give some proof that Dehalī Vinayaka was established well before the composition of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*.

In this chronological survey of the sources relating to Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa in Banaras, attention now moves from literary sources to the iconographic sources of Pañca-Vināyaka worship. The group of the fifty-six Vināyakas in Banaras is unique in the Indian subcontinent. In other places one finds smaller groups of Vināyakas, such as eight Vināyakas around Poona, six Vināyakas in Ujjain, and five Vināyakas in Puri. Pañca-Vināyaka worship is an aspect of Vināyaka worship which is little discussed except by art historians who have described the various Pañca-Vināyaka panels found over the north of India. The general attitude of these scholars is that there is no literary evidence to support the iconographic material and therefore not much can be said about this form of worship, except for the fact that it existed as early as the ninth century CE. The earliest of these panels is found near Lakṣmī *kuṇḍa* in Banaras and thus suggests that Pañca-Vināyaka worship was prevalent in Banaras. The following iconographic examination will treat not only Pañca-Vināyaka panels, but also the representations of the five Vināyakas in other sculptures.¹⁸¹

¹⁸¹ I am grateful to Professor N. P. Joshi who drew my attention to Pañca-Vinayaka worship in Banaras.

Earlier in this thesis a representation of five elephant-headed figures in the Mathura museum was mentioned. V. S. Agarwala (1952:106-107) suggests that these form the earliest representations of Gaṇeśa,¹⁸² whereas P. K. Agarwala (1977:139) argues that these figures could be five *gajāśīrṣa yakṣas* and therefore could be considered as a prototype of the five Vinayakas. The earliest stone panel representing the Pañca-Vināyaka concept was found in Banaras and was first described by P. K. Agarwala (1975:72-73; 1977:139-40) (see Appendix, Fig. 1). The panel is about one metre wide and fifty-two centimetres in height. It is carved on both sides, with the Pañca-Vināyakas on the upper face. According to Agarwala there is a representation of Viṣṇu sleeping on the snake on the underside of the panel. Five elephant-headed figures are depicted, of which the first three and the fifth are Vinayakas and the fourth is an elephant. Whereas the Vināyaka figures are sitting in the *lalita* position, the elephant is standing with its trunk curved towards the right. The Vināyakas each have a *nāgayajñopavīta* and two arms. In their left hands they are holding something which looks like sweetmeat but their right hands are damaged. Their trunks turn towards the left and seem to touch the *modakas*. It is the elephant in the fourth position, however, which has attracted the attention of scholars, as will be seen. This stone panel belonged to an early Gurjāra-Pratihāra temple which brings its date to about 800 CE.

A replica of this stone panel is found in the same place. This was discovered in a miniature shrine which is stylistically dated to the early tenth century.¹⁸³ This replica is in red sandstone; its height is ninety-six and a half centimetres and the sides of the square are thirty-five and a half centimetres. On the four sides there are representations of Hindu deities. On the side that points towards the north there is a panel depicting four divinities: Śiva and Pārvatī are situated in the centre; on the left is Gaṇeśa with four arms, his two upper arms holding a snake in the air; and on the right side is a figure so damaged that it cannot be identified. However, the attribute of the *abhaya mudrā* and the *kamaṇḍalu* (ascetic vessel) suggests that it could be Skanda and that this panel depicts the 'holy family'. The long horizontal panel on the same side shows the Pañca-Vināyakas. There are some minor differences between the first ninth-century panel and this one: the most obvious is that here the four Vināyaka are seated in a row, again in the *lalita* position, and the elephant is standing, at the end of the line on the right. The Vināyakas are four-armed and are holding *paraśus* and *aṅkuśas* in their upper hands and sweetmeats in their lower right hands. Their trunks, which are curved towards the left, are touching the *modakas*. The elephant is again shown in a frontal perspective and the trunk is curved towards the left (P. K. Agarwala 1977:141-142).

¹⁸² 'Bas-relief (12'x2'-3') carved with three horizontal bands. The second band consists of six horseshoe arches, each between two dwarf pilasters and containing the bust of a worshipper with a garland. In the third band there are five elephant-headed *yaksas*, showing the earliest representation of a Ganesa figure in Mathura art, perhaps an offshoot of Kubera iconography. The Mathura sculptures belong to the Kusana period'.

¹⁸³ In Gurjara-Pratihara architecture it was not unusual to make miniature versions of an existing temple which were called *sivalas* (P. K. Agarwala 1970:140).

Representations of Pañca-Vināyaka panels found in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh indicate the extent of Pañca-Vināyaka worship. The earliest sculpture outside Banaras is the Jamaroli panel which is dated to the eleventh century CE. There are four Vināyakas, all in a dancing stance, and one elephant. The elephant is the second from the right. It is interesting that the figures are represented with haloes behind their heads and stand on lotus flowers. The four Vināyakas are represented with a mouse or rat near their right feet. The elephant is depicted from the side but with its head turned towards the front and its trunk coiled to the right (R. C. Agarwala 1971:107). The other Rajasthani panel is found in the Someśvara temple in Kiradu (see Appendix, Fig. 2).¹⁸⁴ R. C. Agarwala places this tableau in the eleventh century but Dhaky believes it should be dated a century later.¹⁸⁵ The Pañca-Vināyaka panel is found in the *raṅgamaṇḍapa* of the temple and it depicts five seated Vināyakas. They are all two-armed and hold various attributes. The first one seems to hold a tusk in his right hand. His left hand is damaged. The trunk coils towards the right. The second in the row holds a *modaka* bowl in his left hand and his right hand is also damaged. His trunk also turns towards the right: the tusks of the other three, however, are turned towards the left. The third holds an axe in his right hand and something which seems like a *modaka* or a pomegranate in his left. The fourth is also depicted with a *modaka* pot in his left hand but the right hand is damaged. The last one is somewhat peculiar in that his right arm is in the air and he carries a knife. In his left hand he holds *modakas* (R. C. Agarwala 1971:107). Another Pañca-Vināyaka panel depicts the Pañca-Vināyakas of Kadwaha in the Guna district in Madhya Pradesh.¹⁸⁶ The panel is rather damaged and difficult to date. The five Vināyaka figures indicate that it is probably from around the eleventh century. Although P. K. Agarwala (1977:151) has dated it to the tenth century, the fact that the figures are not wearing crowns could possibly date it earlier. At each of their feet is a mouse. The first Vināyaka is shown facing towards the front and in the *lalita* position but is badly damaged. The second Vinayaka turns his head towards the central Vināyaka and his body is in an odd position although, because his legs are damaged, it is not possible to see whether he is dancing or not. The central Vināyaka is depicted in a *tribhaṅga* position and he wears a *nāgayajñopavīta*. The fourth figure is turned towards the central one and seems to be the reverse of the second Vināyaka. Although his arms have disappeared it can be seen that he is dancing. He also wears some ornaments around his neck. The fifth Vināyaka is again facing forwards, his trunk turned towards the left (see Appendix, Fig. 3).

Another example from Madhya Pradesh is the door lintel of Surwaya.¹⁸⁷ P. K. Agarwala dates this panel to the eleventh century. The five Vinayaka figures are seated in the

¹⁸⁴ A.I.I.S. negative no. 54.879.

¹⁸⁵ Dhaky gives a brief description of the Someśvara temple and dates the temple between 1159 and 1179 CE (1967:41-43).

¹⁸⁶ A.I.I.S. negative no. 82.74.

¹⁸⁷ A.I.I.S. negative no. 83.20

lalita position and in their two hands they carry an axe and a bowl with *modakas*. On the extreme right is a man with a human face.¹⁸⁸ A similar figure is found in other groups of five Vināyakas, to be discussed later. Apart from these panels, which are in good condition, several broken panels have been found in different areas of Banaras.¹⁸⁹ In many cases the elephant statues, which are exact copies of the elephant in the Lakṣmī *kuṇḍa* panel, are separated from the Vināyaka statues but are also smeared with vermilion paint.

The existence of these Pañca-Vinayaka panels implies some form of cult worship. The earliest panels found in Banaras belong to the Pratihāra period. This date, and the areas in which Pañca-Vinayaka panels are found, suggests that the Pratihāras were responsible for fostering this form of worship and that it developed further under later rulers such as the Kalacuris. These panels also give direct evidence of a Pratihāra presence in the city, as was suggested in Chapter One. That the Pañca-Vinayaka concept had become well established is demonstrated not only by the panels but also by the *devapaṭṭas* and *śilpaṭṭas* which represent holy cities in terms of their divine populations. The *śilpaṭṭas* of Banaras clearly depict five Vināyaka figures, thus confirming that the cult was a recognised religious element in medieval Banaras.

A *devapaṭṭa* from Tewar in Madhya Pradesh¹⁹⁰ shows Śiva killing the demon Andhaka in the main panel. Around this representation is a group of five Vināyakas, sitting in two rows, one above the other. The first figure of the upper row is Brahmā, since he is depicted with a topknot and carries a circular lotus in his hand. The five Vināyakas are two-armed and their trunks are turned towards the left and touching the *modaka* bowls, which are held in their left hands. On top of the panel the fourteen *jyotiṅgas* are represented above the twelve Ādityas. On the horizontal bands at the right side of the panel there are eight Devī figures (see Appendix, Fig. 5). Another *devapaṭṭa* shows Viṣṇu as the main god in the centre.¹⁹¹ He holds his solar disk and a lotus in his upper hands and a club and a bow in his lower hands. This panel is broken, although seven of the fourteen *Jyotiṅgas* in the upper band and five Vināyaka figures in the lower one are recognisable. They are depicted in familiar positions. This stone panel, now in the Lucknow Museum, is dated to the twelfth century (see Appendix, Fig. 6).

¹⁸⁸ P. K. Agarwala (1977:151) has various suggestions for this sixth figure seated in the row with the Ganapatis (see Appendix, Fig. 4): 'Does he represent the human-face form of Ganesa himself? Or, is he a Skanda image appearing with the fivefold manifestation of his brother, or some deity?'

¹⁸⁹ Remains of a Pañca-Vināyaka panel were found in the shrine of Sena Vināyaka, close by Maṇikarnika Devi on Scindia *ghāt*. A similar statue of an elephant is to be found at the back of Lambodara Vināyaka on Lali *ghāt* close to Hariścandra *ghāt*. Near to the Pañcakrośī temple in Gola *gali* is a shrine in which there are three seated Vināyakas. Although the statues are covered with paint it is clear that they belonged to a larger panel. Other panels are difficult to locate since they are scattered all over the alleys of Banaras.

¹⁹⁰ A.I.I.S. negative no. 59.94.

¹⁹¹ A.I.I.S. negative no. 16.67.

More relevant to this survey are the *śilpapattas* of Banaras.¹⁹² A distinguishing feature of the *śilpapattas* relating to Banaras is the Ganga which is represented flowing through the panel. Panels depicting other holy *tīrthas* replace the river by another god. The Gwalior slab from Badoh¹⁹³ depicts a river flowing vertically through the panel. The river is full of aquatic animals, all swimming with their mouths upwards. The slab is divided horizontally into four bands, each separated by a narrow strip. On the upper band fourteen Śiva *liṅgas* are depicted. Underneath there are seven Sūrya figures on the right side of the river. On the left, the band is divided and shows twenty-five *liṅgas*, placed in groups of five, on *yonipīthas*. The third band has twelve standing Viṣṇus. The lower band has five Vināyakas, seated in the *lalita* position, with their trunks towards the left. On the left across the river there are two worshippers with garlands in their hands, followed by five others, also with garlands (Joshi 1992:135-136). This *śilpapatta* is almost certainly a representation of Banaras because of a description of a similar panel found in the *Aparājitapṛcchā*, a work generally dated to the twelfth century (Tiwari and Giri 1996:xii-xiv).¹⁹⁴ Another characteristic of the representation on the Gwalior panel is that the river seems to flow towards the north. The aquatic animals are depicted swimming upwards. Banaras partly stakes its claim to holiness on its location at the place where the Ganga flows towards the north. The panel is dated to the eleventh century CE.

Looking for a possible explanation for this concept,¹⁹⁵ P. K. Agarwala turns to the Ghatiyala pillar, earlier described in Chapter Two. The pillar, dated V. S. 918 (862 CE), was topped by a capital consisting of four figures of Gaṇeśa facing in the four cardinal directions. On the capital there is an inscription in which Vināyaka is invoked (R. G. Bhandarkar 1965:212; E. I. volume IX:277 ff.; B. Krishna 1989:36, 44). Bhandarkar considered that the pillar constituted proof of the existence of a Vināyaka cult as described in the *Vināyaka Śānti* of the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* in which four Vināyakas are considered to be manifestations of one single Vināyaka. However, P. K. Agarwala (1977:152) believes that there was a fifth figure on top of the capital which was missing at the time Bhandarkar visited the site; this fifth figure was probably an elephant in conformity with the earliest independent representations of the Pañca-Vināyakas. A photograph of the column reveals just one of the Vināyaka figures but Agarwala's hypothesis that there were five cannot be confirmed since the statue is too damaged (R. C. Agarwala 1963:285-287). What is striking about the Ghatiyala pillar is that like the five Vināyaka panels of the early period, it both depicts four Vināyakas and belongs to the same

¹⁹² For this study of *devapattas* in Banaras I am again indebted to Professor N. P. Joshi.

¹⁹³ Pathari slab in the Gurjari Museum in Gwalior, no. 285.

¹⁹⁴ The *Aparājitapṛcchā* states that in a *pattasālā* of Banaras the goddess Gaṅgā, in *padmāsana*, is in the centre. Other deities such as the Ādityas, the Śiva *liṅgas*, the five Vināyakas, and the Mātṛkās are posted around the centre piece (Joshi 1992:136).

¹⁹⁵ In the conclusion to his survey on the Pañca-Vināyakas, Agarwala (1977:152) writes: "The Pañca-Gaṇeśa representation, now available in more than a dozen examples on reliefs from Varanasi, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, obviously poses a mythical as well as an iconographic problem as to the multiple forms of Gaṇeśa and the fixation of their number as five. However, we are yet to trace any definite textual authority describing clearly this curious aspect, evidenced by artistic portrayals'.

stylistic school, namely that of the Gurjara-Pratihāras. The numerous statues of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa dated to the Pratihāra period indicate that the worship of the god was widespread.

Until now it has been argued by art historians dealing with Pañca-Vināyaka representations that there are no textual sources describing the worship of five Vināyakas, and that it is therefore difficult to regard these panels as providing evidence of cult worship. The reference in the *Tīrthavivecana Khaṇḍa* of the *Kṛtyakalpataru*, however, may suggest otherwise. It is therefore necessary to examine this text in detail.

In his preface to the *Tīrthavivecana Khaṇḍa* Aiyangar (1948:1) describes the *Kṛtyakalpataru* as 'the oldest work of the type extant and one of the earliest of the class. It is also one of the largest as well as the most comprehensive'. The impressive scale and style of the work is attributed to the personality of Lakṣmīdhara who was a Bhaṭṭa Brahmin and probably the *rāja guru* of Govindacandra, the most important ruler of the Gāhaḍavālas. His function as the main advisor of the king is assumed from the praise with which Lakṣmīdhara describes Govindacandra.¹⁹⁶ The Gāhaḍavālas represent themselves as the protectors of the holy places and the revivers of the religious life of Kāśī. With this Nibandha Lakṣmīdhara aimed to give a complete overview of *dharma* as it was interpreted in the twelfth century. It can be assumed from various indications within the text that the author of the Nibandha led a strict life according to the rules he promulgated for others. Later Nibandha writers show great respect for both his knowledge and his logic in the compilation of this digest.¹⁹⁷ The *Kṛtyakalpataru* is divided into fourteen Khaṇḍas but despite its size it is not diffuse.¹⁹⁸ The different Khaṇḍas all deal with various aspects of *dharmaśāstra*.¹⁹⁹

The *Tīrthavivecana Khaṇḍa* is the first extant major work dealing with the subject of the *tīrthas*. Because the text made use of all the existing Purāṇas of the time, its references are an important indication of works that are no longer extant, such as the oldest version of the *Līṅga Purāṇa*. The first section of the *Tīrthavivecana Khaṇḍa* is entitled the *Tīrthayātrā* and introduces the various ways of expiating sins, for example by pilgrimage. Lakṣmīdhara provides the reader

¹⁹⁶ In the *Rājadharmā Khaṇḍa*, Lakṣmīdhara claims that Govindacandra is a benevolent ruler whose wide conquests were due to his own advice as a minister (Aiyangar 1948:xiv).

¹⁹⁷ Lakṣmīdhara supposed that the readers of his digest were familiar with simple religious terms and customs. While this was the case in Lakṣmīdhara's own era, after the Muslim invasions and during Muslim rule a lot of the traditions were lost and priests could no longer be assumed to be learned. Later authors of Nibandhas have therefore given fuller comments and guidance to meet this new situation.

¹⁹⁸ In the introduction to the *Dāna Khaṇḍa* Lakṣmīdhara himself expresses his intention to be concise. Aiyangar (1948:introduction) writes: 'Of authorities on an identical topic, a text is given in one place and another in a different context, as is required by its purpose; what is founded on correct knowledge is declared and what is based on ignorance, even if popular, is rejected; ambiguities are cleared up, and only what is accepted by all authorities fully is stated; and where controversy has been endless, Lakṣmīdhara has given a decision'.

¹⁹⁹ The *Kṛtyakalpataru* has ordered the different Khaṇḍas according to the stages of life (*āśramas*). The Khaṇḍa on the *tīrthayātrā* follows those which deal with normal religious duties, the regulations concerning gifts, and *pūjā* (Aiyangar 1948:xxii).

with comprehensive information concerning the performance of *yātrās*.²⁰⁰ The central subject of the second part is pilgrimage to sacred places such as Kāśī, Prayag and Gaya, together with various rules and customs which need to be observed before attending a *tīrtha*.²⁰¹ The descriptions of the holy places begin with an account of Kāśī which had become the foremost place of pilgrimage in India.²⁰² In his account Lakṣmīdhara names three hundred and forty shrines. Aiyangar is of the opinion that Lakṣmīdhara provided a complete list of all the sacred places in the city of his time, thus suggesting that any unmentioned site was probably constructed later. However, given Lakṣmīdhara's own words that 'opinions, even popular, constructed on ignorance are to be rejected', Aiyangar's assumption must be open to question. It seems most likely that Lakṣmīdhara knowingly omitted places of popular interest because they were not described in the Purāṇas he consulted and hence lacked authority and authenticity. In addition to this selectivity, most scholars who have studied the *Tīrthavivecana Khaṇḍa* agree that Lakṣmīdhara's own geographical knowledge was far from complete.²⁰³ However, some scholars in Banaras believe that a man of the status of Lakṣmīdhara would have been very well informed about his own territory and its boundaries. This becomes a contentious issue because Lakṣmīdhara did not mention the Pañcakrośī Yātrā, the circumambulatory pilgrimage route,²⁰⁴ in his work. The explanation for this, however, is unlikely to be ignorance but rather because he was not prepared to include a pilgrimage which did not feature in any major Purāṇa.²⁰⁵

A description of all the *tīrthas* mentioned by Lakṣmīdhara is beyond the scope and purpose of this thesis, but it is important to note some of the major deities who are included, as well as those ignored. The digest of Lakṣmīdhara provides literary support for the evidence of the Rajghat seals which reveal that Viśveśvara only became the city's main deity from the early thirteenth century onwards. Viśveśvara is mentioned only three times in the entire digest; once

²⁰⁰ The *pradakṣiṇā*, the custom of making *namaskāra* to a *tīrtha*, and treating the *tīrtha* as a divinity are among the prescribed rituals (Aiyangar 1948:liv-iv).

²⁰¹ Bathing, vows, prayers and rituals for ancestors are a recommended part of the performance at every *tīrtha* (Aiyangar 1948: lxi).

²⁰² The city had already gained this fame by the eleventh century CE when the Muslim traveller Al-Biruni visited the region. He noted that Kāśī was the premier *tīrtha* of India (E. Sachau 1988 (1910):146). The supremacy of Kāśī was already known in south India from the tenth century onwards. One of the inscriptions bearing this information states that 'the deadliest of all sins is the killing of Brahmins and cows in Kāśī' (Altekar 1947:28).

²⁰³ One example given by Aiyangar (1948:xlvi) supports this. In his account of *tīrthas* outside the Gāhaḍavāla kingdom Lakṣmīdhara describes the Cauvery river in a chapter about the Narmada river.

²⁰⁴ The Pañcakrośī Yātrā is a pilgrimage route of five *krośīs* circumambulating the sacred city. On the route there are one hundred and eight shrines, eleven of which are Vināyaka shrines. For more detailed information about this pilgrimage, its significance and symbolics, see Rana P. B. Singh (1987, 1988, 1991 and 1993).

²⁰⁵ The first reference to the Pañcakrośī Yātrā is found in the Marāṭhī work of the beginning of the sixteenth century, the *Gurucaritra*. A full description of the pilgrimage does not occur in the Purāṇas until the seventeenth century when it was included in a part of the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*. The date of this Purāṇa, however, is disputed and might be late. Sukul (1977:211) believes that there is one reference to the *yātrā* in the *Tīrthavivecana Khaṇḍa*. In the *Nānātīrtha Māhātmya* of the *Vāmana Purāṇa* (as described in the TVK:237) it is written: 'In the month of Māgha, after having visited the *tīrtha* of Prayag, go to Kāśī. Take a bath at Daśāśvamedha *ghāṭ* and visit the temples, then circumambulate the city and do *pūjā* for Avimukteśvara'. This statement does not necessarily imply that the circumambulation was around the *kṣetra* of Kāśī. It is possible that Lakṣmīdhara had the Antargṛha Yātrā in mind, which is the pilgrimage of the most important shrines in the centre of the city. For more details on the Antargṛha Yātrā, see R. P. B. Singh 1992:53.

is probably an interpolation and in the other two cases it refers once to the 'Lord of the Universe' and once to an ordinary *liṅga*. In Lakṣmīdhara's time the chief deity was Avimukta (TVK:93; Motichand 1985:190). The *Tīrthavivecana Khaṇḍa* only mentions twenty-four important Devī shrines. Of these, nine shrines are devoted to Caṇḍī and nine to Durgā. Of the temples dedicated to the Sun only Lolārka is mentioned. The later Kāśī Khaṇḍa refers to twelve Āditya temples.²⁰⁶ The cult of Kāla Bhairava seems to have been unknown or unimportant to Lakṣmīdhara since there is not a single allusion made to it. There is then a significant discrepancy between the limited number of shrines referred to by Lakṣmīdhara and the much larger number of sacred spots and deities present in the Kāśī Khaṇḍa.

Returning now to the previous discussion of the Pañca-Vināyaka cult, Lakṣmīdhara's Nibandha in fact mentions five Vināyakas in contrast to the more than fifty-six named in the Kāśī Khaṇḍa. Unfortunately, either because of textual problems in the manuscripts or in the Aiyangar edition, or because the Sanskrit used in medieval Māhātmyas fell far short of the rigorous standards of classical Sanskrit, the few ślokas dealing with the Pañca-Vināyakas are far from clear. Rather than dwell on what is most certainly a corrupt text, it is sufficient to say that the text refers to Pañca-Vināyaka (pañca vināyakāḥ), that three are named, Ḍhuṇḍhi, Koṇa and Sindūra, and that the five Vināyakas should all be seen and sweets given in order to attain the greatest success and good fortune. Since apparently Lakṣmīdhara based his entire Nibandha on Purāṇas it can reasonably be argued that the reference to Pañca-Vināyaka worship features in one of the Puranic sources which has since been lost. It can certainly be seen from these four ślokas that in his Puranic source the concept of the Pañca-Vināyakas was well established. This cult of the Pañca-Vināyaka, which begins in the ninth century in the Pratihāra period and region, was represented in both its initial and evolved forms in Banaras and is attested in Lakṣmīdhara's text. That this concept lived on in perhaps two different forms will be seen later.

Having dealt with Pañca-Vināyaka worship and also the *Tīrthavivecana Khaṇḍa* of Lakṣmīdhara, it is now necessary to turn to the most prominent and extensive Māhātmya dealing with Kāśī, the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, which is particularly significant in the present context. A full discussion of the composite nature of the *Skanda Purāṇa* and the problem of the dates of its various parts is given by Rocher (1985:228-232) and to Rocher's treatment now needs to be added the more recent findings of Adriaensen, Bakker and Isaacson (1994). Neither of these sources, however, makes the dating of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* possible. The *terminus a quo* must be Lakṣmīdhara's *Kṛtyakalpataru* of the twelfth century. Lakṣmīdhara quotes from a *Skanda Purāṇa* but makes no reference to the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. This suggests that the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* is later than the twelfth century. The *terminus ad quem* must be 1440 CE when the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* was

²⁰⁶ From epigraphic material of the Gāhaḍavāla dynasty we know that the Lolārka shrine was situated at the Assi *saṅga* and that it was considered to be an important *tīrtha* as the queen had bathed there.

rendered into Telugu by the poet Śrinātha.²⁰⁷ Eck (1980:84) believes that although it is unthinkable that the *Khaṇḍa* would have been composed before the time of Lakṣmīdhara, it does not make sense that it should have been written in the troubled times of the Muslim period. She therefore believes that the *Khaṇḍa* may have come into existence during the golden age of the Gāhaḍavālas, but that its final compilation was later. While Eck may be right, it is possible that she is too ready to see the period of Muslim rule as uniformly negative. In fact there were periods both of destruction and of revival under Muslim rule, as demonstrated in Chapter One. The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* is not only a glorification of Kāśī as a sacred place but also of Viśvanātha, the main deity of the city. There is evidence of donations for the reconstruction of the Viśvanātha temple during Muslim rule. The construction of the Padmeśvara temple at the door of the Viśvanātha temple took place in 1296 CE. It has also been suggested that the Ātmavīreśvara temple on Maṇikarpikā *ghāṭ* was constructed in 1302 CE. There are therefore ample grounds for considering that within the period 1250 to 1350 CE not only were Hindu developments within the city permitted but that they were possibly also encouraged. It is therefore not unreasonable to attribute the composition of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* or its final compilation to this period.

An initial examination of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*²⁰⁸ reveals that the *Māhātmya* was a eulogisation of Kāśī, its shrines and Viśvanātha, and that it should be considered as a blueprint of the cosmologisation of the city as a sacred centre. It was Eck (1986), however, who first drew attention to the cosmologisation of the city in the form of a conceptual *maṇḍala*, and to the confusion concerning whether the grouping of the fifty-six Vināyakas constitute a *maṇḍala* or not. This will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Having established an approximate date for the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* it is now time to turn to the content of this *Māhātmya*. The following analysis of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* will provide evidence that the text was chronologically structured and that the whole text can be considered as a cosmologisation of Kāśī with the glorification of the new Lord of the city, Viśvanātha, as its aim.

The *Khaṇḍa* consists of two books, the *Pūrvārdha* and the *Uttarārdha*, each containing fifty chapters. In order to facilitate the analysis of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, the content of each chapter will be summarised below.

²⁰⁷ Śrinātha in fact adapted only a small part of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* in his poem. Personal communication with Professor Rao, Banaras Hindu University, 1997.

²⁰⁸ For convenience of reference the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* is available in translation in English in volumes fifty-eight and fifty-nine of the AITM series (1996-1997), and in Hindi, up to chapter seventy-five, in Tripathi (1996).

Pūrvārdha of the Kāśī Khaṇḍa

1. Because the Vindhya mountains were jealous of Mount Meru, they grew higher and higher and obstructed the Sun.
2. A description of the *satyaloka* and of certain places in south India.²⁰⁹ The problem of the Vindhya mountains blocking the rays of the Sun is related to Brahmā who decides to send Agastya, the *guru* of the Vindhya mountains, to solve the problem.
3. A description of the hermitage of Agastya in Kāśī.
4. Agastya is told of his mission to tame the Vindhya mountains and his wife, Lopāmudrā, is eulogised by the gods as being a chaste woman, whereafter the characteristics of chaste women are detailed.
5. The merits of Kāśī are narrated and Agastya and Lopāmudrā leave for the Vindhya mountains. Agastya subdues the mountains and then they go to Kolhapura, where they worship Mahālakṣmī.
6. Agastya narrates to Lopāmudrā the merits of the seven sacred places granting salvation.²¹⁰
7. The story of the seven holy cities is narrated through the story of Śivaśarman, a wealthy Brahmin living in Mathura who, at the end of his life, makes a *yātrā* to all seven holy places and dies in Haridwar.
(The following fourteen chapters describe Śivaśarman's journey through the different worlds after his death and on his way to salvation in chapter twenty-one.)
8. The world of Yama.
9. The regions of the celestial maidens and the Sun
10. The worlds of Indra and Agni.
11. The world of Vahni.
12. The worlds of Nirṛti and Varuṇa.
13. The worlds of Gandhavatī, belonging to Varuṇa, and Alakā, the residence of Kubera.
14. The world of Soma.
15. The world of the stars.
16. The world of Śukra (Venus).
17. The worlds of Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.
18. Description of the world of the seven sages and a short hymn of praise for Arundhatī.
- 19 to 21. The story of Dhruva, the pole star and son of King Svayambhu Manu. Dhruva is a devout worshipper of Viṣṇu and because he outshines his brother, his stepmother bans him from the palace, after which Dhruva performs penance to Lord Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu grants him a boon

²⁰⁹ A footnote in the English translation of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* suggests that the Purāṇa writer was a southerner. There are affectionate references to places in the south of India and also reference is made to Mahārashtras, who at the time of the composition of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* must have been an established community (II:10).

²¹⁰ Kāśī, Kāntī, Māyā, Ayodhyā, Dwārāvati, Mathurā and Avantikā.

and he becomes the pivot of the entire universe. The end of chapter twenty-one gives a short hymn of praise to Kāśī as the city of Viśveśvara.

22. Brahmā praises Kāśī. In this chapter the extent of Kāśī is said to be five *krośas*.

23. Although there are seven holy cities granting salvation, it is only in Kāśī that salvation is certain. The end of this chapter states that there is no difference between Śiva and Viṣṇu.

24. Śivaśarman is taken to Vaikuṇṭha, from where he is born as King Nandivardhana. At the end of his life he renounces all his wealth and travels to Kāśī where he worships Viśvanātha and attains salvation.

25. Agastya and his wife circumambulate the Śrīgiri mountain and proceed to the forest in which Skanda resides. Agastya and Lopāmudrā meet Skanda and after prostrating themselves, the sage asks Skanda to narrate stories of Kāśī.

26. The chapter begins with the creation of Avimukta which extends over five *krośas*. Viṣṇu eulogises Avimukta and Śiva wants Viṣṇu to stay there forever. Description and glorification of Maṇikarṇikā.

27. The story of how Ānandakānana became Varanasi and a description of the greatness of Ganga.

28. Continuation of the story eulogising Ganga.

29. The thousand names of Ganga.

30. The greatness of Avimukta. Another description of some of the topographical features of the Avimukta *kṣetra* and the praise thereof.

31. The manifestation of Bhairava and the story of the Kapālamocana.

32. The manifestation of Daṇḍapāṇi. How the *yakṣa* Harikeśa received the boon from Śiva and Pārvatī to stay in their vicinity.²¹¹

33. The glory of Jñāna Vāpī: how the well came into being and the story of a Brahmin girl who worshipped the well, was kidnapped by a demon and became a queen named Kalāvati who had visions of Kāśī.

34. Continuation of the story: in her dreams the queen sees all the *tīrthas* of Kāśī, the last one being Jñāna Vāpī which is considered to be unique and superior to all *tīrthas*.

35. Another eulogy of Avimukta. Skanda narrates the *sadācāra*, the conduct of the good, to Agastya and Lopāmudrā.

36. The rites and duties of a religious student.

37. The characteristics of virtuous women.

38. Continuation of the characteristics of virtuous women.

39. The manifestation of the Lord of Avimukta and the explanation of why King Divodāsa had to come to Kāśī.

40. Description of the duties of the householder.

41. The path of *yoga*.

²¹¹ The content of this story is adapted from the story of *yakṣa* Harikeśa in the *Matsya Purāṇa* (180).

42. The characteristics of a dying person and the means of escaping from Kāla.
43. The character and virtues of Divodāsa are described.
44. A description of Kāśī and Śiva's longing for his city. Pārvatī urges Śiva to invent some tricks to occupy the city again.
45. The arrival of the sixty-four *yoginīs* in the city.
46. Description of Lolārka, the Sun god.
47. Description of Uttarārka, in the north of the city.
48. The greatness of Sāmbāditya.
49. Description of Draupadāditya and Mayukhāditya.
50. Description of Khakholāditya.

Uttarārdha of the Kāśī Khaṇḍa

51. Description of the other Sun gods who settled in the city.
52. Brahmā goes to Kāśī and asks Divodāsa to perform ten *aśvamedhas*: description of Daśāśvamedha as a *tīrtha*.
53. Śiva's attendants, the Gaṇas, go to Kāśī.
54. The greatness and importance of the Kapardiśa *liṅga* and the story of Piśāca. The greatness of the Piśācamocana *tīrtha*.
55. Gaṇeśa goes on a mission to Kāśī.
56. The manifestation of the *māyā* of Gaṇeśa.
57. The manifestation of Ḍhuṇḍhirāja and the description of the fifty-six Vināyakas.
58. Viṣṇu goes to Kāśī and manages to trick Divodāsa. Divodāsa attains salvation. A description of various Vaiṣṇava *tīrthas* in Kāśī.
59. How Pañcanāda came into being and the greatness of that *tīrtha*.
60. The manifestation of Bindumādhava.
61. The greatness of the Vaiṣṇava *tīrthas*.
62. The arrival of Śiva in the city and the explanation given by the gods for not returning to Mount Mandāra. The glorification of the Kapila *tīrtha*.
63. The story of Jyeṣṭheśvara.
64. The secret of Jyeṣṭheśvara. The Brahmins come to the city and install *liṅgas*.
65. Manifestation of the Parāśareśvarādi *liṅga*, the *liṅga* to the north of Jyeṣṭheśvara. Description of another five thousand *liṅgas* situated around Jyeṣṭheśvara.
66. Śaileśa *liṅga* and other important *liṅgas*.
67. The praise of Ratneśa *liṅga*.
68. The origins of Kṛttivāsa *liṅga*.
69. The assembling of the sixty-eight holy places of India within Kāśī .
70. The establishment of the deities: thirty-six Devī shrines are described.
71. The exploits of Durgā.

72. The victory of Durgā over the demon and the enumeration of the different *śaktis* into which Durgā divided herself.
73. The greatness of Omkāra.
74. The greatness of Omkāra (continued).
75. The manifestation of Trilocana.
76. The power of the Trilocana *tīrtha* is sung by the birds and the Nāga girls.
77. The greatness of the Kedāra *tīrtha*.
78. The greatness of the Dharmēśa *liṅga*, established by Dharmarāja (Yama) to the east of Viśvanātha *liṅga*.
80. The *vrata* Manorathartīyā is narrated by Śiva to Pārvatī.
81. The legend of the Dharmēśa *tīrtha* and the greatness of the Dharma *kūpa*.
82. The exploits of Amitrajit form the background for the greatness of the Vireśvara *liṅga*.
83. Manifestation of Vireśvara told by Amitrajit's queen in narrating the *vrata* she performed. From verse sixty onwards the *tīrthas* from the Assi *saṅga* up to Maṇikarṇikā are listed in sequence from south to north.
84. The *tīrthas* from the confluence of the Varana down to Maṇikarṇikā are enumerated.
85. The ascetic Durvāsas is granted a boon by Śiva and establishes a *liṅga*.
86. The manifestation of the Viśvakarmēśvara *liṅga*.
87. The sacrifice of Dakṣa.
88. Satī casts off her body.
89. The manifestation of the Dakṣeśvara *liṅga*.
90. The story of Pārvatīśvara.
91. The greatness of Gaṅgeśvara.
92. The story of Narmadeśvara.
93. The manifestation of Satīśvara.
94. The manifestation of Amṛteśa and other *liṅgas*.
95. The story of Vyāsa, how he eulogised Viṣṇu as the greatest god in Kāśī and how his arm became paralysed. The establishment of Vyāseśvara.
96. Vyāsa is released from a curse.
97. The *liṅgas* in Kāśī as *tīrthas*.
98. The story of the arrival of Śiva in the *muktimanḍapa* ('pavilion of salvation').
99. The greatness of Viśveśvara: Śiva is eulogised as Viśvanātha.
100. Details of pilgrimages to be performed in Kāśī to approach Viśvanātha.

Apart from the clear division into two books, the *Pūrvārdha* and the *Uttarārdha*, it can be suggested that the first twenty-five chapters also form a separate unit. This first quarter of the text therefore needs to be examined first. Chapters one to five introduce Agastya, the *guru* of the Vindhya mountains, and his virtuous wife, Lopāmudrā. Chapter six gives an overview of the various sacred places offering salvation and concludes that, of the seven sacred cities, six

offer access to Kāśī (*Kāśīdā*) while it is Kāśī that offers salvation itself (*mokṣadā*). From chapter seven to chapter twenty-four the various directional deities and their worlds, the world of the stars and the world of the pole star, are described through the story of the Brahmin Śivaśarman who, at the end of a virtuous life, decides that he should visit the seven sacred cities of India. After dying in Hardwar he arrives in the world of Yama and from there he makes a journey through the various other heavenly worlds (*lokas*). While the dialogue in this story is between Śivaśarman and the attendants of the different worlds, it is actually Agastya who narrates the story to Lopāmudrā. The purpose of these chapters has been well expressed in Eck's analysis. She writes (1986:51), 'In this multi-levelled universe which we tour with Śivaśarma, every *loka*, right up to the Pole Star, is linked directly to Kashi [*sic*]. Every Lord received suzerainty over his realm by virtue of devotion or *tapas* in Kashi. In this cycle of stories, not only are the regent-Lords of time and space linked to Kashi in their affections and in their origins, but even the other sacred cities of Baharat are linked to Kashi, even the ones proclaimed to be the most powerful are said to be but steps to Kashi, which is the crossing-point to *mokṣa*. As the 'centre', Kashi anchors all the powers of the universe – both vertically through the *lokas*, and horizontally in relation to the other holy places of this world'. In the context of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* being a cosmologisation of Kāśī, this section should be considered as the representation of the cosmos. The shrines, temples, *liṅgas* and deities described in the later chapters of the *Khaṇḍa* have to be placed against the cosmological background sketched out in the first twenty-five chapters. The description of all these shrines, deities and *liṅgas* should in this context be considered as the description of the centre of this cosmos, Kāśī. Chapter twenty-five introduces Skanda who, banned from Kāśī,²¹² resides on the Śrīgiri mountain. This chapter can be considered as a transition between the first quarter of the text and the remainder since, from chapter twenty-six onwards, Skanda takes the main role as the storyteller of the *Khaṇḍa* while Agastya is the one who poses the questions. It is this sudden change in the dialogue which contributes further to the clear distinction between the first twenty-five chapters and those that follow.

The distinction between the first part of the *Māhātmya* and the last seventy-five chapters is further emphasised by the chronologisation and the cosmologisation of the text. Whereas the main characteristic of the first part of the *Māhātmya* was to represent the cosmos in which Kāśī is the centre, the most obvious feature of the last seventy-five chapters is the chronology. The description and summing up of the various deities, *liṅgas* and shrines is not coincidental, for it

²¹² One of the reasons for Skanda's exile from Kāśī is the struggle between him and his brother Gaṇeśa. When their parents decided that they would find a suitable partner for the one who could circumambulate the world fastest, both the brothers set off on their vehicles. Skanda crossed mountains, oceans and rivers on his peacock, while Gaṇeśa circumambulates his parents, explaining that Śiva and Pārvatī are the world. Śiva and his consort are so enchanted by their son's intellect that they married him to both Ṛddhi and Buddhi. By the time Skanda comes back from his journey around the world, the marriage of Gaṇeśa is already performed. Angry at this, Skanda then decides to leave Kāśī forever. (*Śiva Purāṇa* 2:5:19:15-20, 26, as quoted by Courtright 1985:123-124).

is characterised by a clear historical sequence. The following examination draws the attention to this chronology, thereby making reference to the historical material provided in Chapter One.

Chapter twenty-six maps Avimukta as the *kṣetra* of Śiva, as the 'Never Forsaken'. It mentions that Anandavana was the name of the sacred territory before it became known under the name of Avimukta, thus indicating that the relationship with Śiva was established in a later period. The extent of the whole territory is described as being five *krośas*. Although Śiva is the patron deity of the city, Viṣṇu is eulogised as well and the Maṇikarṇikā *tīrtha*, considered to be one of the oldest and foremost *tīrthas*, is also described. The following chapter then explains how Anandavana also became known as Varanasi, lying at the western bank of the Ganga. The Ganga is eulogised and its thousand names are listed (chapters twenty-eight and twenty-nine). Chapter thirty is again a glorification of Avimukta, situated between the Assi and the Varana rivers, thus providing evidence of its extent at an early stage in its history. This chapter also narrates the story of a merchant who wanted to commit the bones of his deceased mother to the Ganga in Kāśī, for it is there that one attains *mokṣa*. This story illustrates the importance of the city for death rites.²¹³ Chapters thirty-one and thirty-two refer to the early religious life of the city. Kālābhairava is considered to be one of the early forms of Śiva and the reference to the Kapālamocana *tīrtha* as the *tīrtha* where even the greatest sinner can obtain salvation may be a direct indication of the existence of the Kapālika sect. The story of *yakṣa* Harikeṣa is adopted from the *Matsya Purāṇa* (chapter one hundred and eighty) and suggests early *yakṣa* worship.²¹⁴

Chapters thirty-three and thirty-four eulogise Jñāna Vāpī, the sacred well near to the present Viśvanātha temple. The history of the well is uncertain as there is no direct reference to it in the *Kṛtyakalpataru*,²¹⁵ but the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* leaves no doubt that it was of great sanctity and near the main shrine of the city. If the reference in the *Kṛtyakalpataru* is any indication, then it would explain that the Jñāna Vāpī well was considered of great antiquity as it was situated near Avimukta, who used to be the 'Lord of the City'. Chapters thirty-five to forty-two deal with the

²¹³ According to Parry, the city became a place for liberation (*mokṣa*) from the eighth century onwards. At that time, however, Maṇikarṇikā was not yet specifically associated with the burning of the dead, and death rituals seem to have occurred within the entire sacred space (1994:44).

²¹⁴ In Chapter Two attention has been paid to the *yakṣas* as the guardians of the earth's riches and fertility. From iconographic evidence it is clear that they occupied a prime position in Buddhism. However, it is not known whether or not they found their way into the urban religious life of Banaras at such an early stage, because the first figures of *yakṣas* found on the Rajghat plateau are dated to the Gupta period (Agarwala and Motichandra 1960:200). It would be expected that *yakṣas* would have been situated, not on the Rajghat plateau, but in the Anandavana and out in Sarnath since these were the areas of early Buddhist occupation. Agarwala and Motichandra are of the opinion that there are still several indications to this early *yakṣa* worship in the Banaras area. Nearby in the village of Bhabhua, a deity called Baram is worshipped on a *chaura* or platform. These *chauras* are considered to be one of the earliest forms of a shrine of the local divinities (in this context see also Coccari 1986 and V. S. Agarwala 1970:185). A second indication of the still prevalent *yakṣa* tradition is the term *bīr* which is applied to some of the *yakṣas*. Coccari (1986; 1992:130-146) has researched extensively on this topic.

²¹⁵ The *Kṛtyakalpataru* refers to Avimuktesvara being located in the vicinity of a sacred well, possibly the Jñāna Vāpī. The text describes how three *liṅgas* spring up in the heart of the devotee who drinks the water from the well (TVK:109-110, as in Sukul 1977:130-136).

various aspects of leading a life of righteousness. These chapters, which do not explicitly describe the religious life of the city, refer to the Dharmaśāstras and the *Yoga Sūtra* of Patañjali, for the *yoga* as described in chapter forty-one is that of Patañjali. The continuity of these chapters is disrupted by chapter thirty-nine in which the virtues of King Divodāsa are related together with the explanation of the name of Avimukta as the 'Never Forsaken'.

The story of King Divodāsa and his rule over Banaras continues from chapter forty-three onwards and actually runs to chapter fifty-eight where the king is transported to heaven. It has been suggested by some scholars (Halpenny 1966-67; Doniger 1976), and discussed above, that the intervention of Divodāsa is a reflection of the Buddhist period in Banaras. The story of Divodāsa appears in other Purāṇas²¹⁶ predating the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, and a comparative study between the variations of the story shows an evolution in the characters of Divodāsa and Gaṇeśa. Doniger argues that the proximity of Sarnath could be the reason why Banaras was chosen as the city of Divodāsa (1976:191). The Buddhist community, however, was not limited to Sarnath as Doniger seems to imply, but was in fact spread all over the city on the Rajghat plateau and in the Anandavana, as suggested by the travel accounts of the Chinese pilgrim Huien Tsiang and the archaeological findings of Sherring (see Chapter One). The coming of Divodāsa at this point of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* further strengthens Doniger's argument. The roles of Gaṇeśa and Viṣṇu symbolise the victory of Brāhmanism over the Buddhists, a victory which was certainly accomplished by the seventh century, as is clear from the account of Huien Tsiang. If the assumption that the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* offers an account of the religious history of Banaras is correct, then Divodāsa must be taken as a symbol for the Buddhist period of the city.

The central myth of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* is that Śiva sends in turn the sixty-four Yoginīs, the twelve Ādityas, Brahmā, the Gaṇas, Gaṇeśa and Viṣṇu to the city to persuade Divodāsa to leave so that he can return to Kāśī.²¹⁷ Everything points to the order of these various deities being chronological, at least as conceived by the Brahmins who wrote the *Khaṇḍa*. Sūrya worship is evidenced within Banaras at least from the Pratihāra period.²¹⁸ It is highly likely that the Yoginīs were regarded as symbols for the class of female village *devatās* which are known from the seals of Rajghat to have been prominent in the religious life of the city from an early period. The intervention of Brahmā appears to symbolise the place of Vedic sacrifices for which Kāśī was well known in an early period.²¹⁹ The early association of the Gaṇas with

²¹⁶ *Harivarṇṣa*, appendix 1, no. 7:57-140; *Brahmāṇḍa* 2:3:67:30-65; *Vāyu* 2:30:23-55.

²¹⁷ This myth, as presented in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, is given in summary form in the Appendix.

²¹⁸ Eck (1993:180) states that the history of Sun worship in Kāśī was prelevant from the fourth until the thirteenth century. Apart from a vast amount of textual evidence, there is a good deal of archaeological and iconographic evidence. A few Sun discs are displayed in the Kala Bhavan Museum. Elsewhere in the city, one finds similar discs near Sūrya *kuṇḍa*, an important place traditionally for Sun worship. In Chapter Five the story of the twelve Ādityas and their shrines will be further examined.

²¹⁹ Referring to Jayaswal (1933), Eck (1993:227) argues that the name of the *ghāt* refers to a 'daśāśvamedha' performed there in the second century CE by the Bhāra Śiva Nāgas, a revivalist Hindu dynasty.

Banaras is known from the Puranic stories of Nikumbha and Kṣemaka (see *infra*). The worship of the Pañca-Vināyakas is evidenced by the panels found belonging to the Pratihāra period in Banaras²²⁰ and can be regarded as present in the city's religious life from 800 CE onwards. Viṣṇu's association with many of the *tīrthas* illustrates developments within the religious life of the city before the Muslim conquests. As discussed in Chapter One, Kāśī ranked as the third foremost *tīrtha* in the seventh century, whereas by the tenth century Kāśī had surpassed the other two sacred places, Prayag and Gaya, in terms of preeminence. Parallel with this evolution is the rise to power of Avimukta, the Lord of the city. But whatever the importance and sanctity of the position of Avimukta, the Viṣṇu cult remained powerful. As discussed earlier (see Chapter One), the ruling Pratihāra dynasty did not discriminate against any particular god: their ecumenism is illustrated by their support of the *pañcāyatana pūjā* in which Viṣṇu is worshipped as one of five deities. From epigraphic material it is known that the Pratihāras were also Sun worshippers. The successors of the Pratihāras, the Kalacuris, may have been ardent Śiva worshippers, but, apart from lending greater support to Avimukta, this did not affect the existing Viṣṇu cult. The Gāhaḍavālas, under whom Banaras witnessed its golden age, were Vaiṣṇavas, as is shown by epigraphic material. Considering all these historical factors it is thus unsurprising that various Vaiṣṇava shrines are eulogised.

Chapter sixty-three proclaims the breakthrough of Śiva as the main deity of the city. His arrival is celebrated with appropriate pomp and splendour and he is eulogised. This is followed by an account of the Brahmins coming from all the corners of the country to install *liṅgas* as a confirmation of the glory and power of Śiva in Kāśī. From here on the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* provides a detailed description of some of the great and important Śiva *liṅgas*, but the order in which these *liṅgas* are eulogised is peculiar. It is considered that in Banaras there are three categories of fourteen *liṅgas* each. The first category comprises the most important and sacred *liṅgas* such as Omkāra, Trilocana, Kṛttivaseśvara etc.²²¹ The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* disregards this ranking as a criteria and mentions the Jyeṣṭheśvara *liṅga*, belonging to the third category, the Parāśareśvara, the Śaileśa and other *liṅgas* before referring to the Ratneśvara (first category) and the Kṛttivāsa *liṅga* (first category). The *Khaṇḍa* does not account specifically for this order, and it is certainly not based on location. In the context of the *Khaṇḍa*'s attempt to provide a chronological history of the religious development of the city, it is possible that the order in which these *liṅgas* appear reflects the contemporary understanding of the historical evolution of the city, rather than the ranking importance of the individual *liṅgas*.²²²

²²⁰ The treatment in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* of the fifty-six Vināyaka grouping will be dealt with in detail in Chapters Four and Five.

²²¹ An overview of the fourteen most important *liṅgas* and their location in Banaras is found in Eck (1993:358). In addition to the fourteen foremost *liṅgas*, she also lists those of the other two categories although she does not provide their location.

²²² Already in chapter fourteen, the Candreśvara *liṅga* is mentioned, which is stationed west of Sankata Devī not far from the present Madhyameśvara temple. Chapter thirty-nine relates the story of the establishment of Avimukteśvara. The rest of the fourteen great *liṅgas* are listed from chapter sixty-one onwards.

In chapter sixty-nine, a list of the sixty-eight holiest sites in India is provided. This is done in the context of Naṇḍin telling Śiva that whatever holy shrines there are in the three worlds capable of bestowing salvation, he has brought to Banaras and associated with particular *liṅgas* or holy places. In this way Kāśī thereby contains within itself the sacred geography of India. The sacred *tīrthas* are located in relation to one another and to some Vināyakas, thus confirming that by the time the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* was composed these Vināyaka shrines²²³ were well established and their position was not disputed. The mapping of these sixty-eight *tīrthas* reveals that the religious topography of the city at that time was concentrated in the north of the city, with some big clusters around Trilocana and Maṇikarṇikā *ghāṭs*, the Matsyodāra area and the area around Viśvanātha and Daśāśvamedha *ghāṭs*. It should be noted that there are hardly any *tīrthas* south of Daśāśvamedha.

Chapters seventy to seventy-two interrupt the listing of the *liṅgas* with three chapters relating to the *tīrthas* of the different goddesses and the exploits of Durgā. Concerning the Devī shrines the same location pattern occurs as with the *liṅga tīrthas*. Chapters seventy-one and seventy-two tell the story of Durgā slaying the buffalo demon. In the framework of the chronologisation of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, it is not entirely clear why these three chapters are placed at this stage of the Khaṇḍa. The biographical records of Pantha (eighth century, see Chapter One) give evidence of a Devī cult at the time of his visit. In chapter seventy it is explained that the different goddesses are mentioned because they 'were posted in Kāśī for the protection of Avimukta'. Whereas it can be assumed that all these goddess shrines were already functional in the religious life of the city before Kāśī became an important *tīrtha*, the new status of Kāśī also changed the function of these shrines. Instead of being simple folk goddesses, they were upgraded to function as the protectors of Avimukta.

From chapter seventy-three the list of the great *liṅgas* continues with the description of Omkāra, followed by that of Trilocana, Kedāra, Dharmēśa and Vireśa. The second part of chapter eighty-three provides a list of all the *tīrthas* situated along the Ganga from the Assi *saṅga* up to Maṇikarṇikā *ghāṭ*. Chapter eighty-four gives the *tīrthas* from the Varana *saṅga* down to Maṇikarṇikā. Chapter eighty-five explains the creation of the Durvāśeśvara *liṅga*, a *liṅga* which does not belong to the forty-two great *liṅgas*. Chapter eighty-six describes Viśvakarmēśvara, a *liṅga* north of Trilocana and considered as one of the first fourteen *liṅgas*.

²²³ The following shrines are mentioned: Dhunḍhirāja (11), Vināyakeśvara (47) and Gaṇādhyakṣa (58). Considering the location of the shrines it can be argued that these two names were further epithets for Dhunḍhirāja. Verse fifty-nine refers to Dantakūṭa; Lambodara is mentioned in verse seventy-one, Vakratuṇḍa in seventy-six, Kūṭadanta in seventy-seven, Ekadanta in seventy-eight, Trimukha in verse seventy-nine. Kharva Vināyaka (96), Arka Vināyaka (98), Dehalī Vināyaka (102) and Uddanḍa Vināyaka (104-105) are also mentioned.

Chapters eighty-seven to eighty-nine again provide an interruption, with the story of Dakṣa's sacrifice to which Śiva is not invited. There is a parallel between this story and the story of King Divodāsa in that, in both cases, Śiva is excluded from the religious activities of the city. It is arguable that the story of Dakṣa, placed as it is here within a clear chronological sequence, could be taken symbolically to represent the Muslim invasions which seem historically to constitute the main reason for the decline in the status of Avimukteśvara. There is an implied reference here to the performance of *satī* by many Rājput women during the period of the Muslim invasions which can be seen, through the sacrifice of Satī in the Dakṣa story, to be the religious cause for the continuing presence of Śiva within the religious life of the city. If this supposition is correct, and certainly the logic of the analysis suggests this to be so, then this must be one of the most unusual applications of the Dakṣa story in any Puranic text.²²⁴ The chapters on Dakṣa are followed by six further chapters on specific *liṅgas*. In chapters ninety-five and ninety-six there is another somewhat unexpected intervention: the story of Vyāsa. Vyāsa comes to Banaras and begins to eulogise Viṣṇu as the main deity of the city, in consequence of which his arm becomes paralysed. Only when he repents, establishes a *liṅga* in his own name, and Viṣṇu himself intervenes, is his arm restored. Insofar as the arm is *par excellence* a symbol of military might, the implication is clear that it was because the Gāhaḍavāla dynasty was Vaiṣṇava that the Muslims were able to overthrow the city and that only a return to royal patronage of Śiva would enable Hindus to restore the city to its former glory. The next chapter, ninety-seven, provides a list of Śiva *liṅgas* as if to demonstrate the superiority of the Śaivas. The ultimate glorification of Śiva comes in chapters ninety-eight and ninety-nine in which he reaches the *Muktimanḍapa* and is eulogised as Viśvanātha, the protecting deity of the city. These final chapters not only proclaim the superiority of Śiva over Viṣṇu but also explain the decline of Avimukta and the rise of Śiva as Viśvanātha. The very last chapter details the pilgrimages that should be undertaken in order to reach Viśvanātha who will guarantee salvation.

The eulogisation of Śiva as Viśvanātha concludes the chronological process in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* and it gives further support to the suggestion that the sacrifice of Dakṣa could be textual code for the Muslim conquests. The seals examined by Pathak (1975), the references to Avimukta and the Avimukta *kṣetra* in the *Jābāla Upaniṣad* (II:61; Olivelle 1992:142) and the *Daśakumāracarita* (Kale 1966:84) clearly suggest that the Avimukta cult existed between the fifth and the eleventh centuries CE. After the first Muslim conquests of the region, there is suddenly no trace of Avimukta although material postdating the Muslim raids mentions the name of Viśvanātha as the most important deity of the city. The pomp and splendour with which Śiva is honoured as Viśvanātha and is welcomed into the city proclaims his superiority within a historical context. The eulogisation of Viśvanātha in the last chapters could therefore

²²⁴ Similar to the metaphor of Dakṣa symbolising Muslim rule in Banaras, are the references to *rākṣasas* in the medieval Rāmāyaṇas of north India (Pollock 1993).

be considered as the ultimate reason for the chronological sequence displayed throughout the entire Māhātmya.

At the beginning of the analysis it was stated that the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, apart from being a chronologisation of the religious history of Banaras, represents the cosmologisation of Kāśī. The first twenty-five chapters have already been analysed and are considered to represent the cosmos of which Kāśī is the centre. Whereas in the first part the cosmologisation is the main characteristic, it is less obvious in the last seventy-five chapters. In summary, it appears that in the first quarter of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* Kāśī is established as the centre of the cosmos, whereas in the later chapters the various deities, *tīrthas*, shrines and *liṅgas* are established within the Kāśī cosmology.

The cosmologisation of Kāśī starts by the demarcation of the Kāśī cosmos. Chapter twenty-six narrates the creation of the Avimukta *kṣetra*, extending over five *krośas*. The eulogisation of the Maṇikarṇikā *tīrtha* in this chapter suggests that this sacred place had a very important religious value in the early history. Following this is the description of the area inside the five *krośa* boundary, the Varanasi *kṣetra* and the Ganga river. Having glorified Avimukta, in chapter thirty the Avimukta *kṣetra* is described. When these five chapters are considered, it is clear that the three different *kṣetras*, namely the Kāśī *kṣetra*, the Varanasi *kṣetra* and the Avimukta *kṣetra*, are deliberately set out, thereby offering a geo-cosmological background for the next chapters. The deities, *liṅgas* and *tīrthas* described in the following chapters (thirty-one to sixty-eight) all lend colour to the Kāśī *kṣetra*. Because of their presence the Kāśī *kṣetra* is what it is: the most sacred of the *kṣetras*. In most of the chapters the notion of sacred geography is present. Not only are some of the deities directly linked to particular *tīrthas*, but there also are many geographical indications. For instance, Dehalī Vināyaka is said to be stationed at the western gate of the city (KKH 30:23), the geographical locations of some of the Ādityas are given as well as some of the locations of the fifty-six Vināyakas (see *supra*), and Jñāna Vāpī is described as being close to Avimukta. The cosmologisation is very prominent in chapter sixty-nine, in which sixty-eight holy places of India are listed. These places are all represented as *tīrthas* in Kāśī, thereby tacitly indicating that Kāśī is the centre of the cosmos as it encompasses all the sacred spots within its boundaries.

From chapters seventy to eighty-two, there are further descriptions of the various holy characters within the Kāśī cosmos. Chapters eighty-three and eighty-four are somewhat peculiar in that they provide a systematic listing of all the *tīrthas* from the Assi *saṅga* up to Maṇikarṇikā (chapter eighty-three) and from the Varana down to Maṇikarṇikā (chapter eighty-four). The systematic account outlines once more the importance of Kāśī as the microcosm within which all these *tīrthas* are present. By using Maṇikarṇikā as the central reference point for the listing, the importance of this *tīrtha* is once more emphasised. From chapters eighty-four

to ninety-six more sacred places are listed and situated within the Kāśī cosmos. Chapter ninety-seven captions all the aforementioned *liṅgas*. The reference to Kāśī as the *mukṭimaṇḍapa* in chapters ninety-eight and ninety-nine acknowledges the supreme position of Kāśī as the supreme *tīrtha* for salvation with Śiva as Viśvanātha as its Lord. At the end of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* Viśvanātha is introduced as the centre of Kāśī, and this role is further emphasised by the references to various pilgrimages in Kāśī which lead to unification with Viśvanātha.

In conclusion, it can be stated that all the chapters in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* contribute to the creation of the conceptual Kāśī cosmos. First the universe, with its heavenly bodies and directions, is created. Then Kāśī is established as the centre of this cosmos. Thereafter the different smaller cosmii within Kāśī are described: the Kāśī *kṣetra*, the Varanasi *kṣetra* and the Avimukta *kṣetra*, until finally the centre of the Kāśī cosmos, Viśvanātha, is revealed.

Having established that the sequence of the text is chronological, that the *Māhātmya* is a cosmologisation of Kāśī and that the underlying reason for this is the eulogisation of Viśvanātha, it is now necessary to examine the place of the fifty-six Vināyakas within this chronology and cosmology of Kāśī.

The story of the fifty-six Vināyakas is found in chapters fifty-five to fifty-seven. These chapters form part of the Divodāsa story. In chapter fifty-five there is a reference to Kṣemaka who is referred to as 'the Lord of Gaṇas'. It is also mentioned that Kṣemaka is still present in Banaras and meditates daily on Viśveśvara. As Śiva comes to terms with the fact that all those who were sent to Kāśī will not return, he calls Gajānana (the elephant-faced) and asks him to go to Kāśī as well. In this chapter Gajānana is addressed as 'the son of Śiva'. In chapter fifty-six, Gaṇeśa takes the form of an old astrologer who predicts dreams and deludes people's minds. King Divodāsa comes to know about this extraordinary astrologer and asks him to foretell the future. Having praised Divodāsa for his noble qualities, Gaṇeśa predicts that eighteen days later a Brahmin will appear who will give the king advice. The king is advised to obey the Brahmin so that all his wishes will be fulfilled. Chapter fifty-seven features the *Dhruṇḍhi stotra*, which is a eulogisation of Gaṇeśa, and a description of the fifty-six Vināyakas. It clearly states that the Vināyakas are established to protect the *kṣetra*.

Within the story of Divodāsa (chapters forty-three to fifty-eight), the chapters on Gaṇeśa and the Vināyakas succeed those on the sixty-four Yoginīs, the twelve Ādityas and the Piśācamocana *tīrtha*. Bearing in mind the chronological sequence of the *Khaṇḍa*, it is therefore possible to assume that the presence of the Yoginīs and the Ādityas in the city predates that of Gaṇeśa and the Vināyakas. Assuming that the Yoginīs were probably the Brāhmanised female local deities, present from the earliest period, it is likely that they predate the Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa cult. The twelve Ādityas are clearly remnant divinities from Sun worship, which was prevalent

in Banaras until the thirteenth century. The earliest origins for Sūrya worship in Kāśī are unknown, and even the antiquity of the twelve Āditya shrines has never been properly investigated, thus making it impossible to provide any date.²²⁵ However, these shrines definitely predate Vināyaka worship. The Piśācamocana *tīrtha* is affiliated with the worship of the *piśācas*. From the earliest of references to Vināyaka, it is clear that the Vināyakas themselves were often associated with the *piśācas* (*Mahābhārata*, *Śānti Parvan*, Appendix I, number 28, lines 421-423; see Chapter Two of this thesis). It can thus be suggested that the Divodāsa story respects the chronological sequence.

The chapters dealing with Gaṇeśa and the Vināyakas are placed in an interesting context with regard to the content of chapters fifty-five and fifty-six. The reference to Kṣemaka as 'Lord of Gaṇas' in chapter fifty-five provides the background for the following verses. Whereas Kṣemaka is called 'Lord of the Gaṇas', Gaṇeśa is called 'elephant-faced', and is referred to as 'my son' by Śiva. It is clear that the elephant-faced son was somehow affiliated with the Gaṇas, as he features in the same chapter. The verses in chapter fifty-six, describing the calamities which will befall the kingdom of Divodāsa, are similar to the verses of the *Vināyaka Kalpa* of the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* and the *Vināyaka Śānti* of the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti*.²²⁶ The 'men in ochre robes who create horror and fear in the people' of verse eight is similar to verse ten of the *Vināyaka Kalpa*.²²⁷ The fall of the kingdom in chapter fifty-six, verse ten corresponds with verse fourteen of the *Vināyaka Kalpa*, and verses eighteen and nineteen of chapter fifty-six describing the animals preying on the city correspond with verse eleven of the *Vināyaka Kalpa*. In analysing of the place of the chapters fifty-five and fifty-six, it is also important to refer back to the actual appeasement of the Vināyakas as described by the *Vināyaka Kalpa* and *Vināyaka Śānti*. The *Vināyaka Kalpa* includes an invocation of various gods, whom Thapan (1997:92-93, Appendix, footnote 3) considers to be associated with Buddhism, after which the various personifications of the goddess are described. Only thereafter is Sun worship mentioned. The last verse of this text mentions that both Vināyaka and Ambikā need to be appeased by an offering prior to the worship of the Sun. The *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* refers to Ambikā during the Vināyaka worship, but again, both Ambikā and Vināyaka need to be worshipped before the Sun. In Chapter Two it was suggested that the appeasement of the Vināyakas was indirectly linked to the worship of the goddess and of Sūrya. This affiliation is still present in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. A cross reference to the *Vināyaka Kalpa* and *Vināyaka Śānti* indicates that the Vināyakas were of less importance than Sūrya, since they needed to be worshipped first, thus

²²⁵ In Chapter Five the Sūrya shrines in Banaras will be further examined in conjunction with the work of Rana P. B. Singh.

²²⁶ See Appendix.

²²⁷ Kane (1968-74:volume I:187) has suggested that the reference to people in red and ochre robes may be a reference to the Buddhists. The recurring reference to men in ochre robes at this point of the *Khaṇḍa* reinforces the argument made by Doniger (see *infra*) and also indicates that, considering the chronological timeframe of the chapters, the Buddhists were still present when Vināyaka made his entry into the city.

establishing the greater antiquity of Sūrya. This antiquity is translated in a chronological manner in the *Khaṇḍa* by referring to the twelve Ādityas before the fifty-six Vināyakas.

For the Yoginīs, the matter is slightly different. Earlier it was established that these were probably Brāhmanised village goddesses. The links with Ambikā are less obvious, however, as both were considered female goddesses and as Ambikā seems to personify all the powers and qualities of the different goddesses. Why the Yoginīs are mentioned first in the Divodāsa story is unclear. However, it is possible that the presence of Ambikā in the *Vināyaka Kalpa* and the *Vināyaka Śānti* indicates that her position was already well established, as was her antiquity.

Chapter fifty-five introduces Gaṇeśa into the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, and chapter fifty-six recounts his exploits as an astrologer deluding people's minds. Chapter fifty-seven now needs to be scrutinised to see whether or not its content is also to be considered as a chronological sequence. Verses one to fifty-eight make up the *Ḍhuṇḍhi stotra*, eulogising Gaṇeśa as *Ḍhuṇḍhirāja*. The following verses, fifty-nine to one hundred and twenty, mention the seven circles with the fifty-six Vināyakas. The last verses, one hundred and twenty-one to one hundred and twenty-six, refer to some of the other Vināyakas present in the city. Although this chapter seems to focus more on cosmological aspects by providing detailed information on the seven circles of the Vināyakas, the chronological sequence is easy to detect.

The *Ḍhuṇḍhi stotra* which introduces this chapter eulogises *Ḍhuṇḍhi* and explains that, in order to protect the *kṣetra*, *Ḍhuṇḍhi* set himself up in fifty-six forms. This thus explains why *Ḍhuṇḍhi* is considered to be the origin of the Vināyakas. The character of *Ḍhuṇḍhi* was, as Lakṣmīdhara stated, the first and the foremost of the Pañca-Vināyakas. Earlier in this chapter the Pañca-Vināyaka cult was examined with regard to the relevant material evidence. The different Pañca-Vināyaka panels and depictions suggest the conclusion that the cult existed by 800 CE. The first textual evidence of this is from Lakṣmīdhara and dates to the twelfth century CE. However, knowing that Lakṣmīdhara took this account of the five Vināyakas from a lost *Liṅga Purāṇa*, it is certainly possible that *Ḍhuṇḍhi* may have been the first and foremost Vināyaka of the earliest Pañca-Vināyaka cult. In order to respect the chronological sequence, *Ḍhuṇḍhi* was eulogised first, not only because he was of greater antiquity, but because of his prominent position within the religious life of the city.

In the following chapter of this thesis, the fifty-six Vināyakas will be examined in detail as to their iconographic characteristics, their place, and their date. It should be noted here, however, that their treatment in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* is by location and not by chronology. The last verses (one hundred and twenty-one to one hundred and twenty-six) make reference to more Vināyakas. It is equally meaningless to scrutinise their position in terms of antiquity, as it is clear from the text that they merely provide some examples of the multitude of Vināyakas in the

city. The fact that they are mentioned at all probably merely means that they had some importance in the city.

In terms of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* providing a cosmologisation of Kāśī, chapter fifty-seven offers some valuable material. Chapters fifty-five and fifty-six do not constitute any cosmology: rather they sketch the background for chapter fifty-seven which can be regarded as a cosmologisation within a cosmologisation. The eulogy of Dhuṇḍhi establishes him as the main Vināyaka of Kāśī, as the origin and the centre of all the fifty-six Vināyakas. From verse fifty-nine onwards, there is a description of the seven circles on which these Vināyakas are situated. This account (see Fig. 10) provides a very structured plan of how these Vināyakas are situated in Kāśī. Along with the Vināyakas of the first and outer circle, the four cardinal directions are mentioned. The other Vināyakas are described in relation to one another. Whether or not this structure constitutes a *maṇḍala* will be discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis. Here it is sufficient to say that the account of the fifty-six Vināyakas clearly gives a representation of cosmology, the outer boundary of Vināyakas corresponding with the Kāśī *kṣetra*.

The reasons the authors of the *Khaṇḍa* opted for seven circles to represent the Vināyaka cosmos can be explained in several ways. Seven seems to be a sacred number occurring throughout the entire text. Chapter seven describes the seven sacred cities, followed by fourteen chapters dealing with the worlds of the directional deities and the worlds of the sages. The chapters dealing with the moral life are seven in number as are the steps taken by Śiva to expel Divodāsa from his city.²²⁸ Seven is also the sacred number of Śiva. It thus could be argued that, by using seven circles, the authors wanted to emphasise Kāśī as Śiva's city. Dhuṇḍhi, the most important Vināyaka in Kāśī, is thus considered as the centre of the cosmos. Verse forty-three in chapter fifty-seven, referring to Dhuṇḍhi as seated south of Śiva, links his status directly to the power of Śiva, who is the central figure of the Kāśī cosmos.

In conclusion it can be said that chapter fifty-seven reinforces the cosmologisation of Kāśī in the *Khaṇḍa*. By depicting a network of Vināyakas inside the city, the emphasis is once more placed on the Kāśī *kṣetra* as the most sacred place, a place which requires protection. Dhuṇḍhi's role in this process was to be the fountainhead and the centre of this Vināyaka structure. By being posted south of Śiva, he indirectly draws attention to Śiva as the centre of the Kāśī *kṣetra*. It should be remembered that the Śiva referred to in these chapters is still Avimukta, as Viśvanātha only enters in the very last chapters of the *Khaṇḍa*. This is also

²²⁸ The seven steps are: the Yoginīs are sent, then Sūrya, Brahmā, the Gaṇas, Piśācamocana, Gaṇeśa and the fifty-six Vināyakas, and Viṣṇu go to Kāśī. An abridged version of the story of Divodāsa as described in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* and a complete reproduction of the chapters fifty-six and fifty-seven, dealing with the exploits of Dhuṇḍhi and the fifty-six Vināyakas, is given in the Appendix.

supported by the reference to Avimukta Vināyaka who 'destroys all the evil of the Avimukta *kṣetra*' (57:114).

The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* has become the most acclaimed work dealing with Kāśī. In the centuries after its compilation it became the principal source from which medieval Nibandha writers obtained their information on the different deities in Kāśī. The *Tīrthacintāmaṇi* of the fifteenth century, written by Vācaspati Miśra (ca. 1450-1480 CE), was the first Nibandha to quote from the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, thus providing evidence for the Khaṇḍa's existence in the middle of the fifteenth century.

No scholars dealing with the literary sources of Banaras have hitherto referred to the *Gurucaritra*, a sixteenth century Marāṭhī religious text²²⁹ composed by Sarasvatī Gaṅgādhara.²³⁰ The main bulk of this text is devoted to the miraculous life of Narasiṃha Sarasvatī, the founder of the Dattātreya cult (Tulpule 1979:352-353, 430). In the context of this thesis the text is important because it provides an account of various pilgrimages in Kāśī and of the Pañcakrośī Yātrā, thus providing the first ever reference to the *yātrā*. Although it is possible that the author, about whom little is known, never visited the city and relied upon other sources for the account of the pilgrimages, the enumeration of the various shrines shows that they were well established within the religious life of Banaras.

The *Tristhalīsetu* or 'The Bridge to the Three Holy Cities' was compiled in the sixteenth century by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, a Brahmin living in Banaras. As mentioned earlier Bhaṭṭa was very active in the religious life of the city and he reputedly convinced Ṭodar Mal to reconstruct the Viśvanātha *mandir*. For most of his life Bhaṭṭa saw his city in ruins and the advice he gave to pilgrims was that when the authentic *liṅga* had been destroyed or carried away, they could still do reverence to the place where the actual *liṅga* had been (T. P. Verma 1984:200; Eck 1980:99). His Nibandha consists of two parts, one part dealing with the general characteristics of a *yātrā* and the second one devoted to the three holy cities: Kāśī, Prayag and Gaya. Included among the main sources for the digest is the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, which seems to have acquired considerable prestige by that time. It is quoted seventeen times in the introduction and numerous times in the section about Kāśī. Although the description of the holy places starts with Prayag, it is Kāśī which receives the most attention. In his account of Kāśī, Bhaṭṭa quotes all the Purāṇas dealing with the *tīrtha*. After an introductory Māhātmya he relates the different aspects of the religious life of Banaras, paying particular attention to the atonement of sins. This is followed by a survey of the various *tīrthas* in Banaras and also of the divine inhabitants of the city. Then follows an account of the different auspicious times and festivals, and the

²²⁹ Both Tulpule (1979:352) and R. P. B. Singh (1993) state that the text was composed in 1538 CE. However, later in his work Tulpule mentions that the *Gurucaritra* was written around 1558 CE (1979:430).

²³⁰ Gaṅgādhara claimed that Marāṭhī was not his mother tongue (Tulpule 1979:352).

description of Kāśī ends with a discussion about atonement and death in Kāśī.²³¹ In his description of the fifty-six Vināyakas in Banaras, Bhaṭṭa copies the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, admitting as much at the beginning of the chapter.²³² There are some slight variations in the names of the Vināyakas which will be discussed later.

In the seventeenth century, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* or the 'Light of the Tīrthas' is, like the *Tīrthavivecana Khaṇḍa*, part of a larger digest on *dharmaśāstra*, the *Vīramitrodāya*, which was compiled by Mitra Miśra.²³³ The *Tīrthaprakāśa* begins with a general discussion about pilgrimage and the faith of the pilgrim. Thereafter follows a description of *tīrthas*, which starts with Kāśī. For the other *tīrthas* he follows the same order as Lakṣmīdhara. Among the sources for his digest are the *Kṛtyakalpataru* and the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, as well as several Purāṇas and the *Jābāla* and *Rāmatāpanīya* Upaniṣads (Eck 1980:99). Mitra Miśra mentions the fifty-six Vināyakas but he quotes the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* as the source of this chapter (TP 209-210). There is one slight difference with the Khaṇḍa: instead of mentioning fifty-seven Vināyakas he omits Mitra Vināyaka in his digest.

The other Māhātmya which focuses on Kāśī as a major *tīrtha* is the *Kāśī Rahasyam*.²³⁴ The present version of the *Kāśī Rahasyam* is regarded as the third part of the appendix of the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, but the attribution of the *Kāśī Rahasyam* to this Purāṇa is disputed by many scholars because it is not found as a part of the Puranic text. The *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* itself is considered to be one of the more recent Purāṇas although it originally may have been composed in the eighth century (Hazra 1940:166).²³⁵ Rocher (1986:163) agrees with a late date, stating that internal evidence of the influence of Tantrism and Caitanya points in this direction. In his introduction to the *Kāśī Rahasyam* Vyāsadeva (1957:2) refers to a quote in the *Tristhalīsetu*, a Nibandha which was written in the sixteenth century, that this work already considered the *Kāśī Rahasyam* as a part of the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*. Eck suggests that the late date of the Purāṇa made it possible for additional material to be added to it. Chapters nine to eleven describe the Pañcakrośī Yātrā, the circumambulation of the holy territory. Many scholars believe that this is the first textual reference to this pilgrimage and conclude from this that the *yātrā* is a recent phenomenon. However, the examination of the Marāṭhī work *Gurucaritra* of

²³¹ In the last part about death and liberation in Kāśī, Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa intervenes in the role of a commentator (Eck 1980:100).

²³² Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa: *Tristhalīsetu*, in Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series, no 78, Poona, 1915:198-200.

²³³ Mitra Miśra belonged to a family from Gwalior and his digest was composed at the court of the Bundelkhand rulers.

²³⁴ The *Rahasyam* consists of twenty-six chapters and seems to be an attempt to establish Kāśī as a common *tīrtha* for both Śiva and Viṣṇu. Unlike the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, the *Rahasyam* contains little geographic information and it does not describe the various *lingas* and *tīrthas* separately. The title of the book, *Kāśī Rahasyam* or 'The Secret Teachings of Kāśī', suggests the more esoterically spiritual nature of this composition. The *Kāśī Rahasyam* also poses questions about sin and about the atonement of sins committed in Kāśī and elsewhere.

²³⁵ Hazra (1940:166) quotes Jogesh Chandra Roy, who has examined this Purāṇa carefully, and concluded that 'It was first composed most probably in the eighth century CE. From about the tenth century it began to be changed by the interfering hands of the Bengal authors who recast it to its form and contents in the sixteenth century'.

1538 CE contradicts this. Similarly to all the previously mentioned Sanskrit treatises, the *Kāśī Rahasyam* also describes Dhuṇḍhi and the fifty-six Vināyakas.²³⁶

The last work which deserves attention in this chapter is the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa* which dedicates several chapters to the exploits of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa in Banaras.²³⁷ The problem of this Purāṇa within the context of the group of fifty-six Vināyakas is largely one of dating. Hazra points out that several factors indicate that the Purāṇa is of late origin. As evidence he notes that the Purāṇa is nowhere mentioned among the list of the eighteen Upa-Purāṇas. Internal evidence such as familiarity with the days of the week and the term *horā*, the popularity of the *pañcāyatana pūjā* and the content of the *Gaṇeśa Gītā*, which has adopted most of its doctrine from the *Bhagavad Gītā*, support his theory. Furthermore he points out that there is a reference to Āgamas and other works of a late date. Hazra (1951:96) believes that the Purāṇa cannot be dated before 1100 CE and belongs within a band between 1100 and 1400 CE. He is also inclined to believe that this Upa-Purāṇa was later than the *Mudgala Purāṇa* since it includes fifty-six forms of Gaṇeśa, whereas the *Mudgala Purāṇa* only speaks of thirty-two and fifty-one forms. Hazra (1951:98) also concludes that the work was probably written in Banaras. Farquhar (1967:206, 270) places the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa* between 900 and 1350 CE and believes that this Purāṇa was earlier than the *Mudgala Purāṇa* which he dates to 1100 CE or later. Stevenson dates the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa* to around the seventeenth century. His reason is the reference to the sacred place Moresvara in the *Upāśana Khaṇḍa*.²³⁸ The date Stevenson proposes was also suggested by the Marathi *paṇḍit* Śyām Bapat in Banaras.²³⁹ He suggested that the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa* was very recent, as late as the eighteenth century. In the introduction to the translation of the *Gaṇeśa Gītā*, which is included within the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa*, Yoroī (1968:7-9) concludes that the possible date for the *Gaṇeśa Gītā* is the ninth to the tenth century. On balance Stevenson's date appears to be the most likely. The significance of the date of the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa* will become apparent when dealing with Dhuṇḍhirāja in Chapter Five and when

²³⁶ The eulogy of Dhuṇḍhirāja starts on page two hundred and thirty-five of the 1957 edition.

²³⁷ An overview of the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa* and a translation of the relevant chapters is provided in the Appendix.

²³⁸ Stevenson states (1845:319): 'The former, called the *Upāśana Khaṇḍa* of the Purāṇa, could scarcely have been written before the seventeenth century of our era, as Moreśvara is mentioned as a great *tīrtha* of Gaṇeśa; but till Morabhatta, who flourished in the former part of that century, gave it celebrity, and originated the Chinchore incarnate Gaṇapatis, it was a place altogether unknown to fame'.

²³⁹ Interestingly, this *paṇḍit* stated that the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa* was indeed written in Banaras, a fact which was contradicted by most other *paṇḍits* who were interviewed.

discussing the discrepancy between the names of the Vināyakas given in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* and those given in the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa*.

CHAPTER FOUR

The fifty-six Vināyakas

Central to this thesis is the investigation of the fifty-six Vināyaka group. Chapter One provided a survey of the history of Banaras, preparing the ground for the eventual dating of these Vināyakas. Chapter Two traced the evolution and development of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa and Chapter Three examined the various iconographic and literary sources for Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa in Banaras. This chapter provides a detailed description of each of the fifty-six Vināyakas, their names, their locations and their iconographic characteristics. Before beginning the investigation, however, it is necessary to look in general at the three problems which arise in the analysis of the statues, their present condition, their location and their dating.

The first problem involves the present condition of the statues. Although most of the Vināyaka figures are obvious representations of the elephant-headed god, the details are not always clear. This is because the statue has been damaged or because layers of vermilion have blurred its contours. Of the existing fifty-six Vināyakas statues, over thirty post-date the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* in which they are all mentioned. These later statues are replacements from various periods. While the loss of the original statues is often blamed on the Muslims, this is probably an exaggeration. There are other possible explanations for their loss such as the expansion of the modern city, accidental damage²⁴⁰ or the effects of weather erosion. Currently, of the full fifty-six, one, Heramba, is missing and two are so damaged as to be undatable.²⁴¹

The second problem concerns the location of the Vināyakas. The location of the Vināyakas is based on those given in the *Vārāṇasī Vaibhava* and *Pañcakrośātmak Jyotiṅga Kāśīmāhātmya*. The authors of these works, Kubernāth Sukul and Kedarnāth Vyās,²⁴² have taken their information from previous guide books for pilgrims. Besides old guide books on the different *yātrās* in Banaras, Vyās also made use of a map prepared in the beginning of the twentieth century by a retired Bengali engineer. Unfortunately this map has not been found. The

²⁴⁰ A good example is Heramba Vināyaka who 'disappeared' during the monsoon of 1996. The foundations of the temple in which he was situated collapsed and the whole structure came down. When revisiting the site in December 1997 the *paṇḍit* responsible for the temple decided to rebuild this temple on a slightly different spot. The Śiva *liṅga*, the only item which remained more or less intact after the collapse, will be reinstalled. Heramba Vināyaka and other *mūrtis* were broken and the *paṇḍit* therefore decided that once the new temple is finished he will try to get the money for new statues. In another place a water pipe runs over the legs of Sthūlajāṅgha Vināyaka on Mīr ghāt, while Gajakarṇa Vināyaka, was eventually found behind trays of sweets at the back of a sweet shop.

²⁴¹ These last two Vināyakas are Sṛṣṭi and Moda Vināyaka, discussed later.

²⁴² Kedarnāth Vyās was born to a family of *paṇḍits* who guided pilgrims through the maze of shrines and temples. He received his training from his maternal grandfather, who, according to his own account, knew every single temple, shrine and *liṅga* in the city. Paṇḍit Vyās is one of the last *paṇḍits* who still has a thorough knowledge of the sacred geography of the city.

Kāśī Khaṇḍa itself offers geographical details about the position of some, but not all, of the Vināyakas and this information is general and limited to describing one Vināyaka in relation to another. The actual location of a number of Vināyakas is disputed. Whereas Kedarnāth Vyās limits himself to listing the different shrines and their location and, where there is a conflict, he provides two addresses, Sukul makes a case for which position he considers to be the correct one. His arguments will be dealt with shortly but it should be noted that because some of the arguments he advances are based on the accounts of the local residents, they should be treated with caution.

The third problem concerns the dating of the Vināyakas. This is hitherto uncharted territory. Although the Vināyakas are all mentioned and named in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* and in other Māhātmyas and, although there is a Vināyaka *yātrā* described in various local pilgrimage guidebooks, the fifty-six Vināyakas are not well-known in Banaras. Most of the Vināyakas are located in private houses, in the corners of temples or are housed in insignificant small shrines along the *ghāṭs*. Because of the chequered history of Banaras and the constant evolution of the city, many of the original shrines and statues have been destroyed and consequently replaced by more recent *mūrtis*. It is unfortunate for this investigation that many of the late medieval and modern *mūrtis* have not attracted the attention of art historians, for the simple reason that iconographically they are not much of a challenge.

There are many gaps in the academic scholarship concerned with Hindu art of the medieval period, that is the period when north India was under Muslim rule (from the late twelfth until the early eighteenth century). The general consensus is that during these centuries Hindu art and cultural expression was suppressed and therefore non-existent. So far, no study has examined the architectural and iconographic remains of this period in north India with sufficient attention to detail. Were such a study to be carried out, it is probably that it would emerge that, far from coming to a stand still, Hindu art instead took on an entirely different form. It would also illustrate that throughout the history of Muslim rule there were periods when there was a considerable artistic freedom.²⁴³ The lack of attention to the work of this period may also be as a result of the fact that the *mūrtis* produced during the Muslim period are not very visually appealing and therefore of no interest to most art historians.²⁴⁴ As only approximately eleven Vināyakas can be dated to the early period (between the seventh and the twelfth century), the analysis and dating of the majority of the Vināyakas has been a considerable challenge! Overall, I have classified the Vināyakas as falling into four broad

²⁴³ It was Professor M. N. Tiwari who pointed out to me that so far no thorough academic research has been done in the area of medieval iconography. He also admitted that in the current political climate, such research would be problematic as it would indeed show that during the Muslim period there were several periods of revival.

²⁴⁴ In the recent work by Martin-Dubost there are only few of the Vināyaka statues reproduced and this mainly because of their rare and peculiar features (eg. Dvimukha Vināyaka, Pañcāsya Vināyaka). In a personal communication with the author (November 1997), he explained that actually none of the statues had any iconographic value for him.

periods. The criteria for assigning any given Vināyaka to a period are their stance, that is whether they are standing or seated, their attributes and ornaments, and the shape of their head and trunk.²⁴⁵ One further criterion is the presence or absence of flexibility or plasticity which also plays an important role in determining their date.

The first category of Vināyakas are those which can be assigned to the period from the seventh to the twelfth century, a period which is the best documented by art historians, thus providing ample references for the Vināyaka statues.. These are perhaps eleven in number.²⁴⁶ The most important rulers of this time in the north of India were the Gurjara-Pratihāras, who, as discussed in Chapter One, encouraged Hindu art to flourish. Briefly, the main characteristics of their early iconography (seventh to ninth century) was the fleshiness and exquisite detailing of the statues. From the ninth and tenth centuries onwards there is a notable spread of the Gurjara-Pratihāra style throughout much of north India, as well as a marked change in sculpture in that much of the animated character and softness gives way to a less flexible form (Huntington 1985:452-459).

Considering the Vināyakas more specifically now; their main characteristics of this period are their stance, number of arms and plasticity. Vināyaka figures representing the god in a standing position belong to this early period. When standing, the body is slightly bent in the *dvibhaṅga* or *tribhaṅga* position, as is the case with Kāla and Jyeṣṭha Vināyaka.²⁴⁷ The standing Vināyaka often leans on a club or an axe (Awasthi 1967:38; Redig 1996:49; Yadav 1997:plates 77 and 79; Martin-Dubost 1997:208). Similar examples of these standing Gaṇeśas are found in the statue of Sankisa, Fatehgarh, Uttar Pradesh (A. Banerji 1993:11), and in the tenth century Gaṇeśa statue of the Dhulela museum (A. Banerji 1993:13). Many of the standing Vināyaka figures found in the north of India depict the god with only two arms. One hand rests on a club or axe while the other hand is folded. More common than the standing representations of the god are the statues depicting him in a seated position. When seated the god usually has four arms and his most common attributes are an axe, a noose, a rosary, a *modaka pātra*, his tusk and a lotus flower.²⁴⁸

Another feature which is typical of the earliest period is that in some of the representations the bridge of the trunk projects further forward than in images belonging to later

²⁴⁵ With the exception of Sthūladanta, Maṅgala and Moda Vināyaka all the Vināyakas are characterised as elephant-headed.

²⁴⁶ Kharva, Kūṣmāṇḍa, Vikāṭadvija, Ekadanta, Varada, Modakapriya, Abhaya, Cintāmaṇi, Jyeṣṭha, Kāla, and Gajakarṇa Vināyaka.

²⁴⁷ The images of Kāla and Jyeṣṭha Vināyaka are very similar to a two armed Vināyaka statue presently in the Dhulela museum. This statue is dated to the late tenth century (A. Banerji 1993:13, plate 6).

²⁴⁸ The *Viṣṇudharmottara*, a Śilpa Śāstra dated between 450 and 650 CE, prescribes the *paraśu* and the *akṣamālā* as the attributes for the right hands and the *modaka pātra* and the lotus for the left hands (*Viṣṇudharmottara* 3:71:13-16).

periods. Cintāmaṇi Vināyaka, half covered by a cloth, is a good example of this. Similar statues have been found as early as the seventh century.²⁴⁹ In the statues of this period Vināyaka wears a minimum of ornaments. Early texts such as the *Viṣṇudharmottara*, the *Bhaviṣya*, the *Līṅga* and the *Padma Purāṇa* mention the *yajñopavīta* as an essential ornament of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa (see Chapter Two). Early Vināyakas do not wear a crown but a head band or a topknot. The features of his head are very elephant-like, with raised temples and slanted eyes and a slightly protruding forehead. According to Sivaramamurti (1950:23-24) Gaṇeśa is represented with a very elephantine head till the Chola period (south India, twelfth century).

The main feature of this early period, however, is the plasticity of the statues. The body is depicted with an unsurpassed flexibility and a unity of limbs, as opposed to later medieval figures in which the second set of arms seem to be disconnected from the body. The grace of the body is further emphasised by the trunk which suggests motion and elegance. The Vināyakas of this period have their trunk curled towards the left or, when the Vināyaka is depicted in a standing position, hanging slightly curled over the potbelly. Plasticity is an outstanding feature distinguishing statues of this period from those of later periods.²⁵⁰ While the use of such aesthetic judgement renders the dating methodology more uncertain than would mechanical innumeration of attributes, it is no less valid for that.

The second category of Vināyakas are those which can be assigned to the period from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, a period which was transitional in the sense that it combines a variety of styles. It is possible to assign seven Vināyakas²⁵¹ to this period. These statues are evidence of a decline in the plasticity and grace which characterised the first period although the complete rigidity as found in the next period is not yet fully developed. The characteristics of the early period are especially visible in the head and the trunk whereas later medieval characteristics express themselves in the limbs create the impression of not being connected to the body. In the existing literature references to such Vināyaka statues in Banaras or elsewhere in north India are rare since art historians have taken a similar view to Redig who argues that, 'Images of Gaṇeśa datable from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century CE are very few and no image of this period has been published from Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal because of the Muslim invasions' (1996:76). Moreover, the recent works dealing with

²⁴⁹ Very similar to the image of Cintāmaṇi Vināyaka is a large image of the god at Biccavolu. The statue does not have any ornamentation, is seated in *lalitāsana* and the trunk bone protrudes (A. Banerji 1993:17). Both Martin-Dubost and Yadav provide ample examples of early Gaṇeśa statues with a protruding trunkbone, e.g. Martin-Dubost (1997:127, plate 9; 134, plate 22 and 23; 208, plate 24; 206, plate 5) and Yadav (1997: plates 9, 10, 12 and 32).

²⁵⁰ In later times when artists tried to represent Vināyaka as an antique image, its actual date is revealed by a lack of plasticity and motion. An excellent example is Piciṇḍila Vināyaka, which, despite all its ancient characteristics, lacks the flair of the earlier statues.

²⁵¹ Arka, Pāśāpāni, Lambodara, Muṇḍa, Yakṣa, Dvāra and Sumukha Vināyaka.

the elephant-headed god by Martin-Dubost (1997) and Yadav (1997)²⁵² hardly discuss any Gaṇeśa figures from north India dated later than twelfth century. None of the authors gives a reason for this but it could be postulated that because of the limited number and the iconographically uninteresting style of these statues, they were excluded. In the sources consulted for this part of the thesis there are only few references to late medieval Gaṇeśa-Vināyaka statues in north India.²⁵³ However, S. L. Nagar (1992:plate 70) has included a photo of a Gaṇeśa from Bundi, Rajasthan. Although none of the Banaras Vināyakas resemble this *mūrti*, the almost geometric looking ears, the eroded hat-like crown and the stiffness of the limbs provide confirmatory evidence of the features of that period. When analysing the fifty-six Vināyakas iconographically, there were a number of statues which could neither be assigned to the first period because they clearly lacked requisite plasticity, nor could they be classified to the third period because they were not rigid enough. It was Professor M. N. Tiwari who pointed out that, not only in Banaras but also elsewhere in India, Hindu statues of the early medieval period (twelfth to fifteenth centuries) have survived, although often in a dilapidated state. Their condition explains why they have not been included in works dealing with the god's iconography. The discovery of these seven transitional Vināyakas in Banaras thus suggests that the assumption, made so boldly by Redig, needs to be revised.²⁵⁴

The third category of Vināyakas consists of those which can be assigned to the period from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century. These number fifteen.²⁵⁵ It can be assumed that the majority of the statues in this category are datable to the latter half of the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century, which, as indicated in Chapter One, was a period marked by greater religious tolerance. The Vināyakas of this period are easy to distinguish from the earlier periods. The elegance displayed by the images of the first period has completely disappeared and it seems as if the Vināyakas statues are a uncoordinated assemblage of limbs and a body. The arms and legs of the Vināyakas do not show the muscularity and flexibility of the earlier images. Some of the images are depicted in the *lalitāsana*, while others are seated in

²⁵² Yadav is an exception, mentioning four images from Banaras which can be dated to the late medieval period: Pañca Vināyaka in Viśvanāth *gali*, Yakṣa Vināyaka with the five faces, Pañcāśya Vināyaka and Dvimukha Vināyaka. She does not specify what she means by 'late medieval' and does not attempt to clarify the dates of these Vināyakas either (1997:37).

²⁵³ Generally speaking, when studying the plastic art of north India, there are very few statues from between the twelfth and the seventeenth century which have a place in iconographical works. One reason is because, compared with the art from medieval south India, there is little material available, and a second reason may be that whatever is left is of little artistic value for inclusion in such works. Professor M. N. Tiwari agrees and believes that a study dealing with the medieval art of north India would shed more light on the historical developments of the whole region during that time.

²⁵⁴ With regard to the statement that no images between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries have survived, it should be remembered that sixteenth century Hindu historians, such as Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, have suggested that many of the images were not destroyed by the Muslims but were hidden in basements or thrown into wells. These drastic measures, taken in times of unrest and chaos, is also a possible explanation for why so many images of that time have disappeared. The fact that they were hidden does not necessary imply that they were reconsecrated afterwards.

²⁵⁵ Bhīmcaṇḍī, Uddaṇḍa, Avimukta, Caturdanta, Praṇava, Vakratuṇḍa, Gaja, Pañcāśya, Kṣipraprasādana, Dvimukha, Dantahasta, Sthūladanta, Kalipriya and Maṅgala Vināyaka.

the lotus position. Another, somewhat unexpected, pose is the 'balancing pose' in which the Vināyaka 'balances' above a mouse or rat. A good example of this is Bhīmacandī Vināyaka (Appendix, page 49). All the images of this period are represented with four arms with the two back arms seemingly unconnected to the main body, giving the impression that they were carved after the rest of the image was completed.²⁵⁶ Whereas in the previous periods the head was characteristically elephant-like, the third period is marked by the lack of this characteristic. The Vināyaka's head is often more slender and the protruding temples and trunkbone are sometimes missing. In some cases, the only feature which gives the Vināyaka an elephant appearance is the trunk. The trunk, which is sometimes curled towards the right, sometimes towards the left, is no longer gently curved but has sharp bends of ninety degrees in several places. In some of the statues belonging to this period the trunk falls down over the potbelly and is only curled at the very end. Another peculiar feature noted in some of the statues is the continuation of the trunkbone over the whole forehead as far as the top of the head. An example of this is Pañcāśya Vināyaka (Appendix, page 66), where the five trunks constitute the top of the head. In the fourth and last period this feature also appears in Trimukha Vināyaka. Depending on the image, the ears can be obvious and large, fanshaped or they are merged with their background panel. There does not seem to be a convention for the shape of the ears. Another obvious medieval feature is the presence of a crown. The base of the crown is shaped in the form of flower petals. The top of the crown resembles a helmet with sometimes an extra decoration on top. Professor M. N. Tiwari, in a personal communication, argues that the presence of this top decoration is typical of the later medieval period (the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries). The majority of the Vināyaka images do not wear any ornaments except for ankle rings and bracelets. There does not seem to be a convention about the *yajñopavīta* as few of the third period *mūrtis* wear one. The only change in the representation of the attributes is their shape; the outlines of the petals of the lotus are sharper and so are the contours of the axe. In the existing art history literature there are few references to late medieval Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa statues in north India.²⁵⁷ Yadav (1997:38) refers to four 'peculiar' Vināyaka statues, two of them belonging to the group of the fifty-six Vināyakas in Banaras, as does Martin-Dubost (1997:177).²⁵⁸

The fourth and final category of Vināyakas comprises those of the modern period, dated between the eighteenth and the twentieth century. These are seventeen in number.²⁵⁹ These statues are of two types, the first type which attempts to reproduce the stylistic features of the

²⁵⁶ There is a lot of similarity between these Vināyaka images and the Hanumān statues of the same period. Both seem to be little more than rough outlines against a background stone. There is no plasticity or flexibility in the display of the limbs and the image is often represented against a stone slab.

²⁵⁷ See footnote 262.

²⁵⁸ From the references Martin-Dubost provides it is clear that he has based himself entirely on the article of Agarwala (1977:139-155).

²⁵⁹ Durga, Dehalī, Siddhi, Kūṭadanta, Rājaputra, Trimukha, Vighnavija, Kūṇitākṣi, Picinḍila, Uddandamuṇḍa, Nāgeśa, Maṇikarṇa, Āśā, Sthūlajāṅgha, Durmukha, Gaṇanātha and Jñāna Vināyaka.

first period and the second type which appears as an extension of the third period. In the first type, the artists do not reproduce the plasticity and elegance typical of the earlier period. The absence of this important feature is the clearest indication of the age of the statues. Despite the fact that medieval Śilpa Śāstras provide a whole array of attributes for Vināyaka, the most frequently depicted attributes of the modern period are still the axe or the noose in the upper right hand and the lotus flower in the upper left hand. The lower hands may hold the rosary and the *modaka pātra*. Sometimes the lower right hand is resting on the knee while the lower left hand holds a book or palm-leaf manuscript. M. N. Tiwari believes that the presence of a book or palm leaf manuscript is a typical attribute for the Vināyakas of the area around Banaras from the late eighteenth century onwards. The modern representations of the Vināyakas are also characterised by their size. Whereas the majority of the Vināyakas of the first three categories were rather small, the maximum about eighty centimetres in height, many of this fourth category are more than one metre in height. A possible explanation for this could be that after the decline of the Mughal empire in the eighteenth century, power resided in the hands of Hindu kingdoms which vied with each other for influence over Banaras, contributing to the restoration and revival of religious life.²⁶⁰ Whereas the Vināyakas of the previous periods did not wear many ornaments, the ones belonging to the modern period wear necklaces, bracelets and ankle rings. Another distinctive feature are the fan-shaped ears in which veins are visible. Finally, most of the modern statues are not set against a background but appear in the round.

Apart from the stance and the shape of the figure, different attributes could also be thought to contribute to the process of dating the Vināyakas. Unfortunately this proves not to be the case as most of the attributes depicted on the fifty-six Vināyakas were common to Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa since the earliest representations. However, there seems to be some consensus about particular attributes associated with a particular form of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa. The problem here is that the group of the fifty-six Vināyakas is unique and many of the fifty-six Vināyaka forms are not found elsewhere. What follows are the most frequently occurring attributes, the hand in which they are held and the Vināyaka forms with which they occur. In some of the cases the significance of the attribute is also mentioned. The noose or *pāśa* is held in the upper left hand and is considered to control human passion (*rāga*). Gaṇeśa carries the noose in his form as Heramba, Kṣipraprasāda, Sṛṣṭi, Uddaṇḍa, Dvimukha, Trimukha and Durga. The *aṅkuśa* or elephant goad can be held in any of the upper hands and is found, alongside the noose, with these same forms of Gaṇeśa. The axe is considered to be one of the oldest attributes of the god and was already established as a Gaṇeśa attribute in the fifth

²⁶⁰ The Gaṇeśa statues erected by the Peśvās (such as Baḍe Gaṇeśa in Kabir Caura, a statue of one metre forty centimetres high: Sākṣī Vināyaka in Viśvanāth *gali*, which was also erected by a member of the Marāṭhī dynasty is about the same height) are a good illustration of this. Today Sākṣī, the witness Vināyaka, is the Vināyaka which should be visited after completing the Pañcakrośī Yātrā. A third example which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five, is the present *mūrti* of Dhunḍhirāja. References to these larger statues of Gaṇeśa are found in the travel accounts of J. Ewen (1886), Newell (1916), Cape C. Philips (n.d.) and Edwin Greaves (1909).

century. Gaṇeśa in the forms of Ekaḍanta and Dhuṇḍhi carry the axe. The *triśūla* or trident has been described by the *Viṣṇudharmottara* as one of Vināyaka's attributes. It should be carried in the right hand. The *abhaya mudrā* is believed to dispels all doubt and fear in a devotee's mind. Vināyaka is depicted with this *mudrā* as Śakti, Heramba and Siṃha. The *varada* or boon-giving *mudrā* is common with Trimukha Vināyaka. The rosary or *akṣamālā* symbolises the one hundred and eight names of the god and is one of the common attributes of Ekaḍanta, Dhuṇḍhi, Durga, Siddhi, Heramba and Trimukha. There are no representations of Vināyaka without the famous *modakas*. The *Vināyaka Kalpa* of the *Baudhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* (III:10:1) already mentions that Vināyaka must be offered sweets (Martin-Dubost 1997: 203). The *modaka* symbolises the *ānanda* that Gaṇeśa bestows to his devotees. The *modaka pātra* is among one of the earliest attributes to be depicted and is found in fifth-century terracotta statues of the god (Martin-Dubost 1997:207, plate 22). A last attribute which is often represented is the *ekaḍanta* or the tusk. It symbolises *saṃsāra*, the eternal cycle of birth and rebirth. Ekaḍanta Vināyaka is represented with the tusk.

In the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, the fifty-six Vināyakas are mentioned as situated in seven covers or circles (*āvaraṇa*) containing eight Vināyakas in the eight directions. This structuring raises the question as to whether the fifty-six Vināyakas are to be considered as constituting a *maṇḍala*, and this will be considered in the next chapter.

For the seventh and last circle of Vināyakas, the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* does not give any directions. Instead the first five Vināyakas, known as *Moda Vināyakas*, are mentioned as a group, after which the names of Jñāna Vināyaka, Dvāra Vināyaka and Avimukta Vināyaka follow. The possible reasons for the omission of the directions are discussed in the last chapter of this thesis.

Fig. 8: The Fifty-six Vināyakas in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*

Name of the Vināyaka	Verse in the <i>Kāśī Khaṇḍa</i> (KKH)	Direction of situation in the KKH
1. Arka Vināyaka	57.59	south-east
2. Durga Vināyaka	57. 60	south
3. Bhīmacaṇḍī	57.61	south-west
4. Dehalī	57.62	west
5. Uddanda	57.63	north-west
6. Pāśapānī	57.64	north
7. Kharva	57.65	north-east
8. Siddhi	57.66	east
9. Lambodara	57.69	south-east
10. Kēṭadanta	57.70	south
11. Bhīmacaṇḍa	57.71	south-west
12. Kūsmāṇḍa	57.72	west
13. Muṇḍa	57.73-74	north-west
14. Vikatadvija	57.75	north
15. Rājaputra	57.76	north-east
16. Pranava	57.77	east
17. Vakratuṇḍa	57.80	south-east
18. Ekaḍanta	57.81	south
19. Trimukha	57.82	south-west
20. Pañcāsya	57.83	west
21. Heramba	57.84	north-west
22. Vighnarāja	57.85	north
23. Varada	57.86	north-east
24. Modakapriya	57.87	east
25. Abhaya	57.89	south-east
26. Simhatuṇḍa	57.90	south
27. Kūṇitākṣa	57.91	south-west
28. Kṣipraprasādana	57.92	west
29. Cintāmani	57.93	north-west
30. Dantahasta	57.94	north

31. Picindila	57.95	north-east
32. Uddandamunda	57.96	east
33. Sthūladanta	57.98	south-east
34. Kalipriya	57.99	south
35. Caturdanta	57.100	south-west
36. Dvitunda	57.101-102	west
37. Jyestha	57.103	north-west
38. Gaja	57.104	north
39. Kāla	57.105	north-east
40. Nageśa	57.106	east
41. Manikarna	57.108	east ²⁶¹
42. Āśā	57.108	south-east
43. Srsti	57.109	south
44. Yakṣa	57.109	south-west
45. Gajakarna	57.110	west
46. Citraghanta	57.110	north-west
47. Stūlajaṅgha	57.111	north
48. Maṅgala ²⁶²	57.111	north-east
Mitra Vināyaka		

²⁶¹ Contrary to the other circles which begin with the Vināyaka situated in the south-east, the sixth circle starts with a summary of the Vināyakas from the east. There is no reason given for this sudden change.

²⁶² Maṅgala Vināyaka does not feature in the English translation of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* by Tagare (1997): instead Mitra Vināyaka is mentioned as the eight Vināyaka (page 57, verses 57:111-112). For a full account of the controversy regarding Maṅgala Vināyaka and Mitra Vināyaka, see *supra*.

In the analysis of each Vināyaka that follows, the Roman numeral before the name refers to the circle on which it stands, followed by an Arabic numeral which indicates its position on that circle. The number between brackets after the name indicates the position within the total grouping. The page number, also between brackets, refers to the page in the Appendix where the picture or sketch of the Vināyaka can be found. The analysis of each one starts with a translation of the name, which is followed by the location. This may consist of an address with a house number, in cases where the statue is situated in a house, or may be a less specific reference in cases where the Vināyaka is situated in a temple or in the open.²⁶³ The relevant quotation from the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* for each Vināyaka is then given. An iconographical analysis of each of the Vināyakas is followed by a discussion of its possible dating.²⁶⁴

I. 1. **Arka Vināyaka (1)** (page 47). 'Vināyaka of the Sun' (*arka* means 'the sun' or 'a ray of light'). Situated at the back of the Lolārka Kuṇḍa, in front of house B 2/17 (Vyās 1987:90; Sukul 1977:357). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'At the confluence of the Ganga and Assi at Kāśī is the Vināyaka named Arka Vināyaka. If he is visited by people on Sundays he will subdue all distress' (57:59). The role of Arka Vināyaka is clearly connected with the worship of the Sun on Sundays at Lolārka kuṇḍa. It is a common belief that in order to obtain a son or to get rid of skin diseases a bath should be taken in the Lolārka kuṇḍa on Sundays (Eck 1993:179; Harishankar 1996:100-101).²⁶⁵ Arka Vināyaka is also mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra*²⁶⁶ (verse one hundred and three).

The statue which is nearly one and a half metres high and flanked by another statue of Gaṇeśa, stands in an enclosed shrine. This simple shrine was constructed in the eighteenth century (Harishankar 1996:101).

The Vināyaka does not wear a crown but around his forehead are some lines which might be an indication of a hairband. The trunk is slightly bend towards the left and the ekadanta is shown. The stance in which Arka Vināyaka is depicted is neither standing nor

²⁶³ For the location of the Vināyakas, the works of Vyāsa and Sukul Kuberāth have been used for reference. Cross checking has been made with the older Hindi guide books on which these authors have based their work. The book written by paṇḍit Vyāsa is, according to the local population of Banaras, the best reference work for the present location of temples and shrines in Banaras and many priests refer to this book.

²⁶⁴ This analysis has greatly benefited from the considerable expertise and valuable suggestions of Professor M. N. Tiwari, Head of the Department of Art at Banaras Hindu University. Further help was also given by Doctor Devanagana Desai. Where it is stated that M. N. Tiwari suggests, without a reference, this indicates a personal communication.

²⁶⁵ On the sixth day of the month of Bhādrapad, also called Lolārka śaṣṭhī, there is a big *mela* around the kuṇḍa. Childless couples flock to the kuṇḍa where they both take a bath together, the wife's sari tied to the man's *dhoti*. When bathing the woman offers certain fruits which symbolise fertility (R. P. B. Singh 1993:219).

²⁶⁶ The *Merutantra*, composed by Raghunāth Śāstri at the beginning of the twentieth century, states in chapter nineteen that there were sixty-four forms of Vināyaka in Banaras, forming eight enclosures of eight Vināyakas each. However, the remark in 19.493 shows that the tradition of the fifty-six Vināyakas is followed. In some cases the reading of the *Merutantra* differs from the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, in which case it will be included. The version used for this Chapter is the reprint of 1990.

dancing, but rather with one knee bent. The god is shown with four arms but the attributes are hard to discern due to an excess of red vermilion. The attribute in his upper right hand could be either a pāśa or an axe and in the upper left he holds a lotus flower. His lower right hand rests on his knee and it is possible that he also holds a rosary but the vermilion paint has blurred the contours. Although there was probably a fourth hand which presumably held the *modaka pātra*, it is no longer visible today.

Arka Vināyaka is one of the Vināyakas which can be dated to the transitional period. He lacks the overall flexibility of the earlier sculptures, for example in the knees and trunk. On the other hand, he does not correspond with the later medieval form. The absence of a crown is also suggestive of an early rather than a later date. The date suggested is post-twelfth century, probably thirteenth to fourteenth century.²⁶⁷ This date also corresponds with the revival period after the first wave of Muslim raids. Because Lolārka was an important shrine in the time of the Gahāḍavālas, the Muslims may have razed this temple as well. The Kāśī Khaṇḍa, however, indicates that there was a Vināyaka called Arka in the vicinity of the Lolārka shrine. A possible hypothesis could be that the original Arka Vināyaka was destroyed during the Muslim raids and that, during the revival period, afterwards a new statue was consecrated.

I. 2. Durga Vināyaka (2) (page 48). This Vināyaka owes his name due to his situation near the Durgā temple which is in the south of the city (Vyās 1987:90; Sukul 1977:357). Durga Vināyaka is situated in a separate shrine to the East of the Durgā temple, close to the kuṇḍa. The Kāśī Khaṇḍa states that, 'The Gaṇādhyākṣa named Durga is the destroyer of all wretchedness. He is in the southern region of the holy area and should be assiduously worshipped' (57:60). Although the Kāśī Khaṇḍa does not mention Durga Vināyaka as situated in the vicinity of Durgā Devī, one must assume that there is a connection. Despite the fact that the Durgā temple is as recent as the eighteenth century, there was probably always a Durgā or Devī shrine nearby. The Durgā temple forms a part of the Nava Durgā yātrā and the mūrti worshipped inside the temple is also known as Kūṣmāṇḍa Devī (Sukul 1977:87). The Kṛtyakalpataru of the twelfth century, however, does not mention any of the Devī shrines. The Kāśī Khaṇḍa, on the other hand, gives a full account of the exploits of Durgā, her worship and her place in Kāśī (Sukul 1977:87).²⁶⁸ It is noticeable that Durga Vināyaka's function is

²⁶⁷ Harishankar (1996:188) agrees with the proposed date. He also mentions another Vināyaka which stands beside Arka Vināyaka and which is, without doubt, older. He dates this Vināyaka the seventh century, thus making it one of the oldest representations of a single Vināyaka. It is conceivable, though unprovable, that this was the original Arka Vināyaka.

²⁶⁸ Chapters seventy-one and seventy-two deal with the exploits of Durgā. Her worship is recommended on the eighth and the fourteenth lunar day and especially on Tuesdays. Tuesday also happens to be the special day for Gaṇeśa worship. The Kāśī Khaṇḍa also prescribes a bath in the Durgā kuṇḍa as the remedy to get rid of the sins of nine births (KKH 72:87). Despite the lack of evidence that the Durgā kuṇḍa which is mentioned by the authors of the Kāśī Khaṇḍa was situated in the south of the city, it is reasonable to assume that Rāṇī Bhavānī merely constructed a stone pond at the place known as Durgā kuṇḍa.

similar to that of Durgā, namely being the destroyer of all wretchedness.²⁶⁹ This Vināyaka is also mentioned in the Tristhalīsetu, the Tīrthaprakāśa and the Merutantra (verses one hundred and ten to one hundred and thirty).

The statue is approximately one and a half metres in height and although it was not possible to see the whole statue, some external features indicate that the present mūrti is of a recent date. The trunk hangs down over a potbelly. According to the local paṇḍit Gaṇeśa is sitting in the lalitāsana position. Because of the garment and the flower garlands covering most of the mūrti, his arms and attributes are not visible. His head is decorated with a silver crescent moon.

It is common belief amongst some paṇḍits in Banaras that the images of Durga, Āśā and Siddhi Vināyaka are exact copies of one another. Since it is not possible to examine all the attributes of Siddhi and Durga Vināyaka as they are covered by cloth, one could assume that these two have the same attributes as Āśa Vināyaka who will be discussed later. However, at this stage it can be said that, taking into consideration the statue of Āśā Vināyaka which shows Vināyaka with a twisted trunk, Durga and Āśā Vināyaka have little in common except for the height.

There are several factors which suggest that the statue is fairly recent. First of all there is the height of the mūrti and secondly are the features of the face and trunk which are round and clear. The head lacks the elephantine features of the first and second period and the trunk hangs straight down. Whether Durga Vināyaka has any features of the third period is difficult to say but the size of the statue suggests that Durga belongs to the fourth period. Taking into consideration that it was Rāṇī Bhavānī who restored the kuṇḍa and commissioned the Durgā temple, it might well be that Durga Vināyaka was established around the same period, and therefore dated to the eighteenth century.

I. 3. Bhīmacaṇḍa Vināyaka (3) (page 49). This Vināyaka acquired its name from the goddess 'Bhīmacaṇḍī' which is a corruption of 'Bhīṣmacaṇḍī', meaning the fearful Caṇḍī (MW:758).²⁷⁰ Bhīmacaṇḍa Vināyaka is located in the complex of the Bhīmacaṇḍī Devī temple on the Pañcakrośī Yātrā (Sukul 1977:358; Vyās 1987:90). The Kāśī Khaṇḍa states: 'In the south-west of the kṣetra near Bhīmacaṇḍī is Bhīmacaṇḍa Vināyaka. By taking his darśana all your fears will be destroyed' (57:61). The position of the Vināyaka in relation to the Devī temple is clearly stated and even the function of the Vināyaka corresponds with the function of

²⁶⁹ Verse eighty-two of chapter seventy-two reads: 'Durgā, the destroyer of all wretchedness, should always be adored at Kāśī on the eighth and fourteenth lunar day and especially on Tuesdays'

²⁷⁰ Similarly to the Nava Durgās, there are nine forms of Caṇḍī, Bhīṣmacaṇḍī being one of them. The *Līṅga Purāṇa* mentioned by the *Kṛtyakalpataru* (126-127) reads that Bhīṣmacaṇḍī is the protector of the northern region (Sukul 1977: 84).

This Vināyaka is mentioned by the Tristhalīsetu and the Tīrthaparakāśa. Merutantra classifies him as 'Jñeyāśvāṇḍa Vināyaka' (verse one hundred and thirty-one).

The actual statue, without adding the height of the rodent mount, is approximately sixty centimetres high. On his head is a crown which is typical of the third period: a helmet-like structure on a petal-like base with a top decoration.²⁷¹ The lack of plasticity and the pose of the Vināyaka, balancing above his mount, is another clear indication of this period. The trunk is turned towards the left and is touching the *modaka pātra* which is held in the left upper hand. In the right upper hand is an axe but the attribute of the lower right hand is not clear. The lower left is holding a *loṭā*. On the upper right hand is a bracelet and it is therefore possible that the Vināyaka was originally depicted with bracelets and ankle rings, although the other ornaments are not clearly visible. He does not wear a *yajñopavīta*. The crown and the lack of plasticity classify this *mūrti* to the third period. M. N. Tiwari suggests that because of the top decoration on the crown, the statue is seventeenth, rather than sixteenth, century.

I. 4. Dehalī Vināyaka (4) (page 50). 'The Vināyaka of the Gate' (*dehalī* means door or gate).²⁷² Dehalī Vināyaka is known as the protector of the western gate of Kāśī. His temple is found on the Pañcakrośī Yātrā in the village of Bhatauli near Caukaṇḍi (Sukul 1977:358; Vyās 1987:90). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'In the west of Kāśī is Dehalī Vināyaka. He destroys all the obstacles if you take his *darśana*' (57:62). His name is also mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaparakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse one hundred and thirty-eight).

The statue is eighty to ninety centimetres high and features a Vināyaka standing on a rat. The characteristics of this Vināyaka are very unusual. He is standing in the *sāmabhaṅga* position (with his feet together). The crown is plain and resembles a hat more than a crown. It could be that the crown originally depicted flower petals at the base but they have become invisible because of layers of vermilion. He has wide ears, the trunk is turned towards the left and touches the *modaka pātra* which is held in the left upper hand. In his right upper hand he holds a lotus, in the lower one an *akṣamālā*. The upper left hand carries the *modaka pātra* and the lower hand is holding a *loṭā*. The most peculiar feature is a third eye, a silver spot which slipped from its original position between the eyes and is here placed on the trunk bone, giving Dehalī Vināyaka an almost comical appearance. The surface of the statue is smooth, the potbelly is skillfully carved and the hands and attributes have some roundness to them.

The statue is definitely modern, nineteenth- or maybe even early twentieth-century, thus making the *mūrti* more recent than the temple, commissioned by Rāṇī Bhavānī in the middle of

²⁷¹ Professor Tiwari explained that the helmet-like crown in iconography is one of the typical characteristics of the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries (personal communication).

²⁷² In the English translation of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* by Tagare (1997), Dehalī Vināyaka is spelled Dehali Vināyaka.

the eighteenth century, in which it is situated. It can be assumed that the present *mūrti* replaced an earlier statue although the priest responsible for the temple could not confirm this. The *kuṇḍa* next to the temple was also built with the Rāṇī's financial support.²⁷³

The Kala Bhawan Museum in Banaras houses a Gaṇeśa statue which was allegedly found near Dehalī Vināyaka (Kala Bhawan, number 158). The god is depicted in a dancing position, with eight arms and with a half lotus medallion above his head. He wears a pearl chain over his forehead and ankle rings. His attributes are a *paraśu*, an *akṣamālā*, the hood and the tail of a snake, his tusk and the *modaka pātra*. The statue is dated to the eighth century. The discovery of such an elaborately carved Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa statue near the Dehalī Vināyaka shrine clearly suggests that the god had achieved considerable importance in the region by the eighth century. Considering that the area around Dehalī Vināyaka was probably no larger than it is now, there can be no doubt that the presence of Dehalī Vināyaka as 'the protector of the western gate of the sacred territory' was the immediate reason for other Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa statues to be erected in the vicinity.

An interesting feature is the presence of the sixteen Vināyakas panel or Ṣoḍaśa Vināyaka on the outer wall of the temple. This shrine is visited after Dehalī Vināyaka on the Pañcakrośī Yātrā. Bühnemann writes, 'A group of sixteen forms (of Gaṇeśa) appears in the texts for the consecration of temples and is occasionally depicted on the temple walls' (1995:38). Rao, however, believes that the worship of sixteen Vināyakas can be dated to the Smṛti period. Although the number of Vināyakas in the *Vināyaka Śānti* consists of four or six, when they were invoked in a *maṇḍala* their number was twelve or sixteen. According to this author a list of the sixteen iconographical representations of Vināyaka is provided in the *Chintāgama* (1992:221-222). As the representations of the sixteen Vināyakas on the wall of the Dehalī Vināyaka shrine are all the same, it cannot be that this is such an iconographic chart.

The presence of the Ṣoḍaśa Vināyaka on the wall of the Dehalī Vināyaka temple may not be coincidental as it is known that Dehalī Vināyaka is one of the most important Vināyakas of the sacred territory. He sits at the most Western point of Kāśī and serves as the radial point for the city with Madhyameśvara as its centre. His name is also mentioned in the *Padma Purāṇa* (see Chapter Three). There is no doubt that Dehalī Vināyaka had an important position from early times and the fact that he was the first Vināyaka and the first shrine which was visited by the pilgrims in earlier days suggests that he may have been honoured with some sort of a shrine

²⁷³ On page fifty-three of the *Tīrthavivecana Khaṇḍa* a Vināyaka *Kuṇḍa* is mentioned but its location is not known. It has been suggested by Rana P. B. Singh that this *kuṇḍa* might be the pond which is next to the Dehalī Vināyaka temple although there is no evidence to support such a theory and considering the fact that the sacred places described by Lakṣmīdhara did not include anywhere outside the sacred territory of Banaras, this would be unlikely. According to Vishvakarma (1987:131) the Vināyaka *kuṇḍa* was nearby the Dharmēśvara *kuṇḍa*, opposite a Vināyaka statue. Today this Vināyaka *kuṇḍa* has disappeared.

or temple. If so, then this shrine was probably destroyed or simply became dilapidated. The present temple with the panel of the Śodaśa Vināyakas indicates that there was a desire to consecrate the new temple properly.

I. 5. Uddaṇḍa Vināyaka (5) (page 51). 'The Vināyaka Holding a Staff'. His small shrine is along the Pañcakrośī Yātrā near Rameśvar (Sukul 1977:359; Vyās 1987:90). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'In the north-west of the *kṣetra* is the Gajānana named Uddaṇḍa Vināyaka. He removes the impertinent obstacles of all his devotees' (57:63). His name is mentioned by the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse one hundred and forty-three).

The statue is between forty and fifty centimetres in height and is very damaged. It does not seem that this Vināyaka ever wore a crown. The slight bulging on the top of the head indicates that he was represented with a topknot but the statue is so damaged that this cannot be established with certainty. The trunk turns towards the left and seems to be touching the *modaka pātra*. The Vināyaka is represented with two eyes. Like Bhīmacaṇḍa Vināyaka he is also represented in a balancing position but he does not seem to have stood on a rat. The upper two hands are very vaguely defined and one can only conjecture about what the Vināyaka may have actually held in them. The upper left hand may have carried a bowl with sweetmeats but the contours are very vague. The lower right hand is placed on the belly and possibly held a rosary. The lower left hand is damaged and hardly visible. The potbelly is chipped off and almost flat. Because of the rough surface of the whole image it cannot be verified whether this Vināyaka was represented with a *yajñopavīta* or ornaments.

It is possible however, despite its eroded form, to date this Vināyaka. Although the absence of the crown could suggest that this Vināyaka belongs to the first period, the awkward balancing position and the stiffness of the limbs clearly date it between the fifteenth and the sixteenth century.

I. 6. Pāśapāṇi Vināyaka (6) (page 52). 'The Noose-holding Vināyaka'. The temple of this Vināyaka is situated in Sadar Bazaar, in the north of the city. It also forms part of the Pañcakrośī Yātrā. The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'In the north of Kāśī is Pāśapāṇi Vināyaka reigning. From paying devotion to him all the obstacles of the Kāśīvāsīs will be destroyed' (57:64). His function as the one who binds the obstacles is derived from his attribute, the noose (*pāśa*).²⁷⁴ Pāśapāṇi Vināyaka is not only the most northern Vināyaka of the Pañcakrośī Yātrā, but also fulfils this function on the smaller Nagar Pradakṣiṇā Yātrā which is considered to be the city

²⁷⁴ The noose is one of the most frequently depicted attributes of the god and is usually carried in the upper left hand. It symbolises the control over the passions or *rāgas* and it stops and binds the evil actions (Martin-Dubost 1997:187).

circumambulatory pilgrimage (R. P. B. Singh 1993:44-45).²⁷⁵ Pāśapāṇi is mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu* and the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and, in both works, his name is given both under the listing of the Vināyakas and under the description of the Nagar Pradakṣiṇā Yātrā. The *Merutantra* mentions his name in verse one hundred and fifty-three.

The statue is half a metre in height. The Vināyaka wears a headband and is depicted in the *lalitāsana* position. He has four hands, the two represented at the back of the statue are very artificial and do not seem to be part of the image, a characteristic which denotes his later origin. In the upper right hand he holds a noose and in the upper left hand he carries a lotus flower. The lower right hand leans on a stick or a club and the lower left hand is holding the *modaka pātra*. The trunk, which has an artificial form, is turned towards the left and touches the sweetmeats, held in the left hand. He has two eyes and his ears are small and crescent shaped. Two insignificant lines under his right hand suggest that he once wore bracelets, but the rest of the image is too damaged to state whether he also wore ankle rings or not. Pāśapāṇi Vināyaka has both the characteristics of the first (the lack of a crown) and of the second period (no plasticity and the arms and trunk are static) which indicate that he belongs to the second period between the thirteenth and the fifteenth century.

Outside the temple of Pāśapāṇi Vināyaka, to the left against the wall, a Gaṇeśa figure stands in the open. This Gaṇeśa or Vināyaka is depicted in *tribhaṅga* position and the motion of the limbs show that this particular *mūrti* can be dated to the ninth or tenth century. Again there is a dilemma as to whether this could have been the original Pāśapāṇi Vināyaka or whether this Vināyaka statue was found in the vicinity and later brought to this temple complex. The *paṇḍit* of the temple was unable to clarify this question.

I. 7. Kharva Vināyaka (7) (page 53). 'The Beautiful Vināyaka'. This is the meaning given by the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* although the dictionary meaning of '*kharva*' is 'the mutilated' or 'the cripple' (MW:338). Kharva is situated in a small temple on Ādi Keshav Marg in the Rajghat *qīlā* (Sukul 1977:355; Vyās 1987:90). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* (verse sixty-five) states: 'The beautiful Kharva Vināyaka is at the confluence of the Ganga and the Varana. He will subdue and reduce even large obstacles of good devotees by showing him devotion'. Kharva's name also appears in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse one hundred and seventy).

²⁷⁵ The Nagar Pradakṣiṇā Yātrā delimits the sacred territory of the city of Varanasi and is described in several Puranic sources: *Matsya Purāṇa* (183. 61-62; 184.40-41), *Padma Purāṇa*, *Kurma Purāṇa* (101) and *Agni Purāṇa* (136). The total length of the *yātrā* is about twenty-five kilometres. This *yātrā* is considered as a symbolic form of the larger Pañcakrośī Yātrā and counts seventy-two shrines, of which ten are Vināyaka shrines (R. P. B. Singh 1993:44; Eck 1993:353). Despite different references to this *yātrā* in various Purāṇas, there is some confusion about the exact territory encompassed by the *yātrā*. In the *Vārāṇasī Vaibhav* this is discussed in great detail on pages forty-nine to fifty-two.

The statue of Kharva Vināyaka is about one metre in height. He is seated but, because of the damaged base of the statue, it is difficult to see whether he is sitting in the *lalitāsana* or not. His head is bare, he does not even wear a head band and with the bulging temples and trunkbone the head is very elephant-like. He has wide ears and two eyes. From the left hand side of the statue it can be deduced that there were four hands originally, although it is not possible to describe what attributes were once held. Around his waist he wears a *nāgayajñopavīta*. Other ornaments are absent. His trunk, protruding at the base, turns towards the left and is rough-cut but there is an unmistakeable flow of movement.

In dating Kharva Vināyaka a similar statue found in Kanauj should also be considered. This figure is dated to the seventh century. The Kanauj Gaṇeśa is in a much better state than Kharva Vināyaka and therefore its attributes, the axe, the *akṣamālā*, the lotus flower and the *modaka* bowl, are more distinguishable (Yadav 1997:34, plate 10). With reference to the Kanauj figure it is possible that Kharva Vināyaka belongs to the first period. The bare head, the graceful seated position and the elephantine face indicate its early date, but its present damaged condition makes it difficult to classify it precisely. Therefore to posit the eighth century as the earliest limit and the tenth century as the upper limit seems reasonable.

I. 8. Siddhi Vināyaka (8) (page 54). 'The Vināyaka of Success'. This Vināyaka, protector of the eastern direction, is found near Maṇikarnikā *kuṇḍa*. Before reaching the *kuṇḍa* there are steps on the left, halfway up which is the shrine of Siddhi Vināyaka (Sukul 1977:356; Vyās 1987:90). The relevant verse in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'To the east of the sacred area, Siddhi Vināyaka is always ready to protect the holy place. He is on the west of the Yama *tīrtha* and is the prompt bestower of powers to a *sādhaka* (aspirant)' (57:66). Maṇikarnikā *ghāṭ* was not yet known as the burning *ghāṭ* when the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* was composed but the reference to the Yama *tīrtha*, which later became known as the Maṇikarnika area, indicates that the Vināyaka is still in its original location. The term 'Siddhi Vināyaka' is very widespread and Siddhi Vināyaka shrines are found everywhere in India. Today the shrine of Siddhi Vināyaka should be visited before commencing a *yātrā* of the sacred territory and at its completion. His name is also mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse one hundred and eighty-four).

The statue is about one metre high and is always covered in cloth, leaving only the face visible for the public. A silver crown is placed on Siddhi Vināyaka's head. Three large eyes are attached to the *mūrti* and, together with the crown, must be some kind of recent donation to embellish the figure. Right above his third eye is a *candra bindu* in shining silver. The trunk, which is very thick, is turned towards the left. Despite the fact that it is not possible to examine this Vināyaka for all of its iconographic features, a few visible characteristics indicate a more recent date. Apart from being a large statue which would scarcely have survived the upheaval

of the medieval periods in the Maṇikarṇikā area, there is also the large and inflexible trunk, twisted by ninety degrees. Thus, the statue can be classified in the modern period and could be even as recent as the nineteenth century. The similarities between this Vināyaka and Baḍe Gaṇeśa in the Kabir Caura area may suggest that the present Siddhi Vināyaka *mūrti* was also established by the Marāṭhīs or the Peśvās, as was Baḍe Gaṇeśa, but it has not been possible to confirm this. It was suggested earlier that Durga, Siddhi and Āśā Vināyaka could be exact copies of each other. The few visible characteristics, however, indicate otherwise: Durga Vināyaka's trunk hangs over his potbelly, whereas Siddhi Vināyaka's trunk twists to the left.

II. 1. Lambodara Vināyaka (9) (page 55). 'The Vināyaka with the Potbelly'. He is situated at the bottom of Lāli *ghāt*, in a small shrine along the Ganges. This Vināyaka is only accessible when the water level is low enough, between December and June. The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'On the western bank of the heavenly river, to the north of Arka Vināyaka is Lambodara Gaṇādhyākṣa who washes off obstacles which have the form of dirt' (57:68). This Vināyaka is also mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse one hundred and ninety-one).

The present location of this Vināyaka corresponds with the description in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. The Lambodara statue is currently situated in a small shrine which was built very recently, possibly ten years ago. Besides the *mūrti* are other figures: an image of the *nāgas* and another of an elephant standing. The elephant figure strongly resembles the elephant depicted in the Pañca-Vināyaka panels of the eighth to tenth century. The collection of figures in this waterside shrine suggest that all these images used to be in the neighbourhood together. The well preserved state of the other figures suggests that they were originally somewhat higher up the *ghāt*, where the tide of the Ganga could not erode them. As recently as 1988 there were major waterworks on this *ghāt* (Harishankar 1996:49) and it would come as no surprise if the figures were moved to their present location at that time.

The statue is about eighty centimetres in height and looks very much like a dancing Vināyaka. The legs are bent and by the right foot, carved in the stone, is the vague shape of a rat. On his head he wears a simple crown which may have originally been a crown with a base of flower petals. Today, however, the lower border of the crown does not have any motif. On the head two modern white eyes are visible and between the eyes is a *candra bindu*. The trunk curls towards the left and is touching sweetmeats. He has four hands, the right upper holds an axe, the lower right rests on the knee. The attribute in the upper left hand is not very clear and could be either a lotus flower or a *pāśa*.²⁷⁶ The lower left hand carries the *modaka pātra*. The

²⁷⁶ Both the lotus flower and the noose are the attributes usually depicted in the left upper hand.

contours of the belly are very clear and the Vināyaka does not seem to be wearing a *yajñopavīta*. Ornaments around the ankles and wrists are vaguely discernible.

The statue itself, in the *tribhaṅga* pose, expresses flexibility and movement and the pose of the Vināyaka is identical to a tenth-century Gaṇeśa with consorts from Bharatpur (S. L. Nagar 1992:plate 6).²⁷⁷ The contours of the chest and the potbelly are extremely well carved. When compared with other dancing Vināyaka figures described by Yadav²⁷⁸ and Martin-Dubost, it is possible that Lambodara belongs to the first period. However, it is the presence of the crown, shaped in the form of a hat because of years of erosion and layers of vermillion, which distinguishes Lambodara Vināyaka from statues of the first period. In addition it is also noticeable that the two back arms do not really form part of the body. These latter two characteristics classify Lambodara as a transitional Vināyaka, probably of the thirteenth or fourteenth century.

II. 2. Kūṭadanta Vināyaka (10) (page 56). 'The Vināyaka with a Horned Tooth'. The word *kūṭa* means 'the bone of a forehead or a horn' (MW:299). This Vināyaka is situated in the Aghora complex on Kṛmi *kuṇḍa* in Ravindrapuri, house no. B 3/335. The Kūṭadanta Vināyaka sits in the open, painted in bright colours (Sukul 1977:357; Vyās 1987:90). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'To the west of him (of Lambodara) and to the north of Durga Vināyaka is Kūṭadanta Vināyaka. He is the annihilator of difficulties and calamities. He always protects this holy place' (57:70). The Vināyaka's present location matches that of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. Kūṭadanta Vināyaka is located near the Kṛmi *kuṇḍa*, described by Prinsep as 'Kṛṇḡa' *kuṇḍa* (R. P. B. Singh 1994:222). Kūṭadanta is mentioned by the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse two hundred and twenty-one).

The Vināyaka is about sixty centimetres high and seated. On his head he wears a crown with a carved flower-petal base. The trunk is turned towards the right and holds a *modaka* which touches his right tusk. This Vināyaka is represented with two tusks, with the left one smaller than the right. His ears are fan shaped. He has four hands, the right upper hand holds an axe, the lower right holds a round object. This could be a *modaka* but it could also be a pomegranate or another fruit. In his left upper hand he holds a lotus flower and in the fourth hand he carries a palm leaf manuscript.²⁷⁹ Because of the paint, the many ornaments Vināyaka is wearing, necklaces, bracelets and anklets and a special arm band decorating the upper arm, are noticeable. The pleats of a *dhoti* are also visible.

²⁷⁷ This tenth century Gaṇeśa statue depicts the god with a topknot and a hairband.

²⁷⁸ In the work of Yadav (1997) there are many examples of dancing Vināyakas, for instance plates 95, 96 and 105 to 109. In most of these cases Gaṇeśa is wearing an elaborated crown or *mukuta*.

²⁷⁹ M. N. Tiwari has stated that the attribute of a book in one of the hands of Gaṇeśa is a typical attribute of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. V. P. Singh has included some plates of Gaṇeśa statues of the nineteenth century, some of them holding a book or palm leaf manuscript (1990).

This *mūrti* is a good example of nineteenth century Vināyakas.²⁸⁰ The manuscript and the ornaments on the arms constitute the evidence of a recent date. Remarkable is that this nineteenth century statue is almost an exact copy of a Gaṇeśa statue found in the Patna museum (Yadav 1997:40, plate 22; Patna museum no. 10617). Yadav states that both the lower hands of this Patna statue are mutilated, however, a glance at the plate shows that this Bihar image held a tusk in the lower right hand. Taking this image into consideration, it could be suggested that the artist carving the Kūṭadanta Vināyaka took his inspiration from the Bihar piece which also is dated to the nineteenth century.

II. 3. Śālakaṭaṅkaṭa Vināyaka (11) (page 57). This is the name of one of the four Vināyakas in the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* and the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti*. The location of this eleventh Vināyaka is on the Marwadi *kuṇḍa* in Muadih, outside Banaras (Sukul 1977:358; Vyās 1987:90). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* does not reveal much about the function or role of this Vināyaka: 'Slightly to the north-east of Bhīmacaṇḍī Gaṇeśa is Śālakaṭaṅkaṭa, the protector of this holy spot. This Gaṇādhyakṣa is worthy of being adored' (57:71). His name is also mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse two hundred and twenty-four).

Although the lower part of the statue is covered in cloth, it is clear that Śālakaṭaṅkaṭa is represented in a seated position. There does not seem to be much differentiation between his head and the crown he is wearing and it almost looks as if he has a long ridged forehead. This type of crown is also worn by other Vināyakas of the same period (sixteenth to seventeenth century). Two nipple-like protuberances indicate his eyes and mark the beginning of his trunk. The trunk is turned towards the left in a particular way: instead of going downwards it goes upwards where it touches the *modaka* bowl held in the upper left hand. The upper right hand holds an attribute what is possibly a stylistic representation of a lotus flower. The ears also show the same stylistic features. In general the statue has the same smooth and round features as Dehalī Vināyaka.

The crown indicates that the statue is not earlier than the sixteenth century but the other features, namely the stylistic flower, the ears and nipple-like protuberances suggest that the statue is much later than the sixteenth century. Accordingly, it is therefore assigned to the eighteenth or nineteenth century with the artist attempting to reproduce features of an earlier period.²⁸¹ The only problem with this dating is that the Vināyaka is somewhat idiosyncratic and

²⁸⁰ In his unpublished Ph.D. thesis from Banaras Hindu University, V. P. Singh includes some illustrations of Vināyakas from the nineteenth century which resemble all the features of Kūṭadanta Vināyaka.

²⁸¹ Taking into consideration the modern structure of the temple, a spacious construction with many columns typical of the post-Moghul princely dynasties, it could even be suggested that the statue, rather than being moved from somewhere else, was established when the temple was constructed.

this would argue against it being a modern reproduction, as these are usually more stereotypical.

II. 4. Kūṣmāṇḍa Vināyaka (12) (page 58). The name of this Vināyaka also appears in the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* and in the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti*. It is also one of the names for Durgā (MW:300). The temple of this Vināyaka lies in the middle of the mustard fields in the Phulwariya village, to the west outside Banaras (Sukul 1977:358; Vyās 1987:90). Near the temple an old panel depicting the Saptamātrkāś (dated seventh or eighth century) was found, as was a damaged statue of Durgā in the form of Mahiśāsurmardini. The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'East of Dehalī Vināyaka is the Gaṇadhyaṅga named Kūṣmāṇḍa Vināyaka. He is always to be worshipped by the devotees for the suppression of great mishaps and calamities' (57:72). He is mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse two hundred and thirty).

The statue of this Vināyaka is definitely old and belongs to the earliest period. The stone is eroded and the features have lost their details. The Vināyaka is bare-headed. A slight elevation on his head may indicate that there was once a topknot but this is only conjecture. All facial expression has disappeared, as have the ears, which have merged with the stone slab against which the Vināyaka is carved. The trunk hangs down, turning slightly to the left. The Vināyaka is seated and has only two arms. In the left hand, resting on his knee, he holds a bowl with sweetmeats but it is not very clear whether the right hand also carries something as the stone is too eroded. It does not seem the Vināyaka was wearing a *yajñopavīta* or any other ornaments.

The presence of the Durgā statue and the Saptamātrkāś panel combined with the clear antiquity of this Vināyaka suggests that Kūṣmāṇḍa should be dated to the eighth century or perhaps even the seventh. Perhaps the orientation of this Vināyaka placed on the westerly access between Dehalī Vināyaka and the centre should be noted since it suggests that the location was determined by directionality and not by its proximity to a *kuṇḍa*.

II. 5. Muṇḍa Vināyaka (13) (page 59). 'The Vināyaka of the Head'. The statue of Muṇḍa Vināyaka is situated in the wall of Caṇḍī Devī's temple in Sadar Bazaar, in the north of the city closeby Pāśāpāṇi Vināyaka (Sukul 1977:359; Vyās 1987:90). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'South-east of the Gaṇapati named Uddāṇḍa is the extremely renowned Muṇḍa Vināyaka. He is to be adored by devotees. His body is stationed in Pātāla. The head is situated in Kāśī. Hence the Lord in Kāśī is known as Muṇḍa Vināyaka' (57:72-73). The text explains the name of the Vināyaka. The current statue of Muṇḍa Vināyaka thus corresponds with the iconographical description given by the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. This Vināyaka is also mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse two hundred and thirty-five).

The statue reveals only the head of the Vināyaka which is about twenty centimetres in height. The trunk hangs straight downwards and only the end curls towards the right. He is shown with big ears and the trunk bone protrudes slightly so that overall the head looks very realistic. While the crown Muṇḍa Vināyaka is wearing is fairly typical of the third period because the shape suggests that here were originally tflower petals on its base. Nevertheless the shape of the head is so elegant and fluid that this Vināyaka is probably another example of the second transitional period.

II. 6. Vikaṭadvija Vināyaka (14) (page 60). 'The Vināyaka with the Huge Tusk'. Vikaṭadvija is located in the Dhūpcaṇḍī Devī temple in the Dhūpcaṇḍī mohalla (Sukul 1977:359; Vyās 1987:90). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'South of Pāśapāṇi Vināyaka is Vikaṭadvija Vināyaka, from whose *pūjā* one will achieve the Lordship of the Gaṇas' (57:75). The function described by the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* refers to one of the older roles of Vināyaka as the 'Lord of the Gaṇas'. The Vināyaka is mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra*. The latter, however, names him: Vikaṭadanta Vināyaka (verse two hundred and thirty-nine).

The statue itself is about thirty centimetres high and is damaged. Only the head and the body are smeared with *sindūr*. Although the feet have disappeared, from the shape of the knees it is clear that this Vināyaka is seated in the *lalitāsana* position. He is bare-headed and has big ears which have merged with the background panel. His trunk curves towards the left and has a high degree of plasticity. Considering the flow of the trunk it is likely that it touched the *modaka pātra* but the sweetmeats are no longer visible. Because one hand in the upper left corner is still visible, it can be assumed that this Vināyaka was represented with four hands. Unfortunately the hands are too damaged to distinguish any attributes.

Yadav has published two photographs of fifth century Vināyakas which show some resemblance to Vikaṭadvija Vināyaka.²⁸² The bare head, the natural flow of the trunk and the two resembling *mūrtis* found in the work of Yadav provide enough evidence to argue that these statues belong to the first period. It is however most unlikely that Vikaṭadvija Vināyaka is of such early date. Taking into consideration the historical evolution of Banaras, the tenth century should be taken as the upper limit for this statue. The well-curved trunk and the presence of four arms classify it to this period.

²⁸² Yadav (1997:32, plates 6 and 7). Both the statues are from Uttar Pradesh and are currently housed in the Mathura Museum (no. 15-1180 and no. 15-832). These two examples given by Yadav emphasise once more the importance of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa in and around Mathura which, in the fifth century, was an important centre for the Jain community (see Chapter Two).

II. 7. Rājaputra Vināyaka (15) (page 61). 'The Crown Prince Vināyaka'. This is the third of the Vināyakas whose name is given in the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* and the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti*. This Vināyaka is found in the Rajghat *qīlā*, in a shrine near the road leading to the Ādi Keśava temple, house no. A 37/48 (Sukul 1977:355; Vyās 1987:90). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'The Vināyaka named Rājaputra is in the south-west of the Lord named Kharva. On being worshipped, he will reinstate a king who has lost his kingdom' (57:76). There could be no better place for Rājaputra Vināyaka than on the Rajghat plateau, which for centuries was the centre of power of the rulers of Kāśī. It is interesting that in the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* princes, when they are possessed by Vināyakas, do not obtain sovereignty. It should also be noted that the three Vināyakas mentioned in the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* and the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* are all situated on the second circle of the Vināyaka group. Rājaputra's name is included in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse two hundred and fifty-one).

Unfortunately the shrine was not open and it was not even possible to take a picture through the door or get any more information about the general iconography of the *mūrti*. Except for the forehead, which is not very revealing, and the eyes, everything else is covered by a garment. The statue is about sixty centimetres in height. Outside the small temple there is another Vināyaka statue which was also covered with a garment. This Vināyaka appears to be of considerable age. It has been suggested that this statue is the original Rājaputra Vināyaka.

II. 8. Praṇava Vināyaka (16) (page 62). 'Aum Vināyaka'. (The word *praṇava* represents the mystical syllable *aum*) (MW: 660). He is located on the southern wall in the Hiraṇyagarbheśvara temple on Trilocana *ghāṭ*. Above the statue is a plaque with his name and the inscription '*Kāśī Khaṇḍa*' (Sukul 1977:356; Vyās 1987:90). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'The Gaṇādhipa named Praṇava is on the western bank of the Ganga and to the south of Rājaputra. On being bowed to he will lead [a devotee] to heaven' (57:77). The function given to this Vināyaka in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* is related to his name in the sense that the articulation of the mystic syllable *aum* leads to liberation. The position of Praṇava in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* corresponds more or less with its current location at the edge of the Ganga. Sukul states that the original location for this Vināyaka was Gola *ghāṭ*, which is one *ghāṭ* upstream from Trilocana *ghāṭ*. This claim is not supported by any argument except for a statement that Gola *ghāṭ* was destroyed by the Muslims.²⁸³ Praṇava is listed in the *Tristhalīsetu* and the *Tīrthaprakāśa* but in the *Merutantra* he is known as Pravaran Vināyaka (verse two hundred and seventy-one).

²⁸³ Sukul further points out that Praṇava is currently in the Hiraṇyagarbheśvara temple because the Vināyaka's original position on Gola *ghāṭ* was also near the Hiraṇyagarbheśvara *tīrtha* and temple (Sukul 1977:356). At present Gola *ghāṭ* does not have much religious significance: the *ghāṭ* was mentioned for the first time by James Prinsep in 1831 CE. It grew in importance at the beginning of the twentieth century (Harishankar 1996:83). Trilocana *ghāṭ*, at the other hand, was already glorified in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* and has always claimed an important position among the *tīrthas* in the city. The *ghāṭ* was completely destroyed during the reign of Aurangzeb and rebuilt in 1740 CE with the financial support of the Peśvās and Nārāyaṇ Dikṣit (Harishankar 1996:82). It is thus

The statue is no larger than thirty centimetres and has an odd appearance. The contours are faded due to the vermilion paint. Praṇava Vināyaka is depicted in *lalitāsana*. On his head he wears a crown which is typical of the third period. He has two artificial eyes stuck on his face. The trunk hangs down over his belly which is flattened by years of erosion and is turned slightly towards the right. He has four hands of which the upper right hand holds an axe. The upper left hand holds something that looks like a lotus flower. The lower hands are so damaged that the identification of the attributes is impossible. It seems that the lower left hand is resting on the left knee. The whole image is very flat and there are no traces of a *yajñopavīta* or ornaments. The peculiar shape of this Vināyaka could make classification difficult, but, if the crown is taken as a criterion, it is possible to suggest the sixteenth or seventeenth century for this image. The way the limbs are represented, without plasticity, plausibly dates it to the third period.

III. 1. Vakratuṇḍa Vināyaka (17) (page 63). 'The Vināyaka with the Twisted Trunk'. This Vināyaka, which is also known under the name of Sarasvatī Vināyaka, is seated next to a Lakṣmī image the outside the Causaṭṭi Yoginī temple on the wall of the Rana Mahala (Sukul 1977:357; Vyās 1987:91). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'On the northern bank of the Ganga, north of Lambodara, is Vakratuṇḍa, the remover of mass sins' (57:80). Vakratuṇḍa also features in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and in the *Merutantra* (verse two hundred and seventy-six).

The Vināyaka is sixty centimetres high and is depicted in the *lalitāsana* position. On his head is a topknot. The face is very elephant-like with slight bulgings at the height of the temples and trunkbone. His ears are small and almost rectangular. He does not show a *yajñopavīta* crossing his stomach, neither any other ornaments. His trunk is curved towards the left and touches the *modaka pātra* which is held in the left lower hand. Vakratuṇḍa Vināyaka has four hands. In the upper right he holds a *pāśa*, and in the upper left he carries a lotus. The lower right hand rests on his knee and the lower left hand holds the *modaka pātra*.

At first sight it appears that this Vināyaka belongs to the first period, as it has a topknot and is reasonably well carved, but closer inspection reveals that the trunk shows a certain stiffness as it seems to be bent in an unnatural way. Also, the two back arms are depicted in the typical style of the medieval period, that is, almost detached from the rest of the body. Apart from these iconographical characteristics the age of the statue is revealed by its surroundings. Next to Vakratuṇḍa Vināyaka's niche is one with a Lakṣmī figure: the two niches form one part and are clearly taken from another temple or shrine and placed here at the entrance of the

possible that what is now known as Gola *ghāt* was originally part of Trilocana *ghāt* and that Praṇava Vināyaka shifted its position a little southwards.

Causaṭṭi Yoginī temple. The depiction of Gaṇeśa and Lakṣmī together can not be dated earlier than the seventeenth century, and therefore this period is taken as its lower limit and it is assigned to the third period. The Causaṭṭi Devī temple itself was constructed in 1807 CE (Harishankar 1996:54-55).

III. 2. Ekadanta Vināyaka (18) (page 64). 'The Vināyaka with the Single Tusk' His statue is found in the Bengali Ṭola in the Puṣpadanteśvara temple, no. D 32/102 (Sukul 1977:358; Vyās 1987:91). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'North of Kūṭadanta Vināyaka is Ekadanta Vināyaka, who protects the forest of bliss from war and riots' (57:81). The description of this Vināyaka in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* is vague, its location remains general and so is his function as a protector of Kāśī. The Vināyaka is mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, *Tīrthaprakāśa* and he is called Dantura by the *Merutantra* (verse two hundred and eighty-five).

The image is very small, about twenty centimetres high, and is represented in the *lalitāsana* position. His head is bare but elephant-like, with bulging temples and a slight protruding trunkbone. The trunk is turned towards the left and touches the *modakas* held in the lower left hand. His ears are large and set against the back of his head. This Vināyaka is depicted with four hands holding a *pāśa* or a *paraśu* in the upper right hand and a lotus in the upper left hand. The lower left hand holds the sweetmeat bowl. Erosion has obscured the lower right hand although its position suggests that it rested on his knee and held an *akṣamālā* or expressing some *mudrā*. The surface of this statue is quite rough and it is thus difficult to see whether the Vināyaka once wore a *yajñopavīta* or any other ornaments.

The overall iconographic features, the bare head and the plasticity, indicate that this statue belongs to the first period. Providing an exact date for Ekadanta Vināyaka is more complicated as the *mūrti* is blurred by layers of *sindūr*. It should also be noted that this figurine shows similarities in form and attributes to two Gaṇeśa figures found in the Mathura Museum (numbers 15-1180 and 15-832).²⁸⁴ However, these Mathura statues are of very early date and therefore, considering the evolution of the city south of the Rajghat plateau, it is possible that Ekadanta could be as early as the seventh or eighth century. His present location in the Puṣpadanteśvara temple, a small temple in the Bengali Ṭola, is unusual since the statue itself is below street level, thus suggesting that this Vināyaka was installed there before the temple was constructed. It is probable that the image of Ekadanta has been in the area for a long time and was once worshipped in the open.

III. 3. Trimukha Vināyaka (19) (page 65) 'The Vināyaka with the Three Faces'. The statue is found in the Tripurānteśvara temple on the Sigra *ṭilā*. D 59/95 (Sukul 1977:358;

²⁸⁴ As in Yadav (1997:32, plates 6 and 7). See also Vikaṭadvija Vināyaka above.

Vyās 1987:91). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* gives some interesting information about this Vināyaka's iconography: 'The monkey-lion-elephant-faced Vighneśa named Trimukha is situated to the north-east of Śālakaṭaṅkaṭa. He is the remover of the fear of the people of Kāśī' (57:82). It is interesting to note that the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* describes this Vināyaka as having three different faces whereas the present Vināyaka is represented with three elephant faces. One might conclude therefore that the text of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* was probably not used as a source in the construction of this Vināyaka. This Vināyaka is mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu* and in the *Tīrthaprakāśa*. In the *Merutantra* he is called Trivadanta (verse two hundred and ninety-two).

The sculpture is around sixty centimetres in height and its most striking feature is that it has three trunks; one in the middle which hangs down over a potbelly and curls towards the right with the other two curling up at either side of the middle one. Just above these two sidetrunks are two protruding nodes which symbolise the tusks. His forehead is elevated and it looks as if the crown and the forehead have become one. It is still possible to see the indentions of the crown on the top. The image is seated on a lotus with his two lower hands resting on his knees. The lower right hand carries a bowl and the other one holds a book. In the two upper arms he carries an axe on the right side and a lotus on the left. His ears are triangular and he has two eyes and a big third eye above the middle trunk. The *nāgayajñopavīta*, although not very clear but still vaguely present, is hung over the belly. The only other ornaments, the bracelets, are also vague but can still be discerned.

The shape of the head with the crown as an extension of it, the book and the lack of motion in the limbs date this Vināyaka to the modern period. In the temple complex there is a plaque with an inscription which says that the temple was constructed on the seventh of March 1874. It seems likely the image also dates from that period.²⁸⁵

III. 4. Pañcamukha or Pañcāśya Vināyaka (20) (page 66). The 'Five-faced Vināyaka' or the 'Vināyaka with the Five Trunks'. Banaras has several Pañcamukha Vināyakas. The one belonging to the fifty-six Vināyaka group is located in a wall on the outside of the Piśācamocana temple, C 21/40 (Sukul 1977:358; Vyās, 1987:91). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'East of Kūṣmāṇḍa Vināyaka is Pañcāśya Vināyaka, who has five heads and also protecta the city of Kāśī' (57:83). Pañcāśya Vināyaka is mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu* and in the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and in the *Merutantra* (verse two hundred and ninety-nine).

²⁸⁵ P. K. Agarwala has described another Trimukha Vināyaka situated near Pañcāśya Vināyaka in a niche at the Piśācamocana temple. He confuses this Trimukha Vināyaka with the Trimukha Vināyaka of Sagra and concludes that this is the one mentioned in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. Both Trimukha Vināyakas are very similar but there is no doubt that the one in Sagra is the Trimukha referred to in the *Khaṇḍa*. Agarwala (1977 (a):154) has given the thirteenth to fourteenth century as the earliest date of the Piśācamocana Trimukha Vināyaka and is supported in this theory by Martin-Dubost (1997:177). However, the iconographical features do not correspond with the Vināyakas of the transitional period.

The image is about seventy centimetres in height. The name 'five-faced' should here be interpreted as 'having five trunks'. The middle trunk hangs straight down, with only the tip of the trunk curling a little towards the left. The two trunks on either side point respectively in the left and the right direction. The two outermost trunks are simply small curled-up versions of the first two. Just as with Trimukha Vināyaka, the crown seems to be an extension of the forehead. It is conceivable that the five trunks continue to the top of the head. The ears are sharply featured and fan shaped. Pañcamukha Vināyaka is represented in the *lalitāsana*. He has four arms, the rear arms are set very artificially against the body. In the upper right hand he is holding an axe and in the upper left hand he holds a lotus flower. The lower right hand is resting on the knee and is holding a rosary. In the fourth hand he holds a book. This Vināyaka wears ankle rings and bracelets. On the stone base on which he is seated is the image of a rat.

Because of his peculiar shape, this Vināyaka is featured in art books. Paul Martin-Dubost (1997:177, plate 98) has also confused Trimukha Vināyaka with Pañcāśya Vināyaka. Underneath his photograph of Pañcāśya Vināyaka, the name of Trimukha Vināyaka is given and he suggests that 'its old representations are very few'. Martin-Dubost dates this statue to the fourteenth century but he does not provide any reasons for this. According to the caption beneath the photograph it is clear that he based his dating entirely on P. K. Agarwala's article. Agarwala (1977(a):155) attributes the figure to the sixteenth to seventeenth century but this seems too early. The book or palm leaf manuscript and the lack of plasticity indicate that it should not be dated earlier than the seventeenth century. It is more likely that the statue is of the same date as the Piśācamocana temple which was constructed in the eighteenth century. The crown, the lack of plasticity in the limbs and trunks and the presence of the manuscript, together with the knowledge that the Piśācamocana temple was constructed in the eighteenth century indicate that this Vināyaka also should be assigned to that period.

III. 5. Heramba Vināyaka (21) (page 67). The name Heramba is one of the epithets of Vināyaka and is related to the Tantric Vināyaka. This Vināyaka was once located in a temple on the Vālmiki *ṭīlā* (C 21/41) (Sukul 1977:359; Vyās 1987:91) but the temple foundations collapsed during the monsoon of 1996. Since then the whole temple has disappeared. During a visit to the site in December 1997 the Heramba statue was nowhere to be seen. Paṇḍit Vyās, in a personal communication, recalled that Heramba Vināyaka did look like every other Gaṇeśa statue. However insignificant this information may seem, it is proof that the Heramba Vināyaka of the fifty-six Vināyaka group does not conform to the iconographical characteristics of Heramba as described in the *Rūpamaṇḍana* (5:16-17), the *Devatāmūrtiprakaraṇa* (8:21) and the *Śilparatna*²⁸⁶ which refer to Heramba as having five heads and riding on a lion. Heramba Vināyaka is an important Tantric form of Vināyaka and his

²⁸⁶ Both the *Rūpamaṇḍana* and the *Devatāmūrtiprakaraṇa* are dated to the fifteenth century, the *Śilparatna* is a South-Indian work dated to the sixteenth century (Tiwari and Giri 1991:appendix).

iconographic features are also described in some Tantric texts such as the *Vidyārṇava Tantra*²⁸⁷ in which Heramba is one of the fourteen forms of Gaṇeśa, in the *Tantrasāradhṛta*²⁸⁸ and in the *Tantrasāra*.²⁸⁹ The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* reads: 'South-east of Muṇḍa Vināyaka is the Lord named Heramba whose worship benefits mothers' (57:84). The reference in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* suggest that Heramba did not have any Tantric connection. Sukul believes that the original Heramba figure was stationed more to the south of the city but he does not provide any support for this belief (Sukul 1977:359). Heramba is mentioned by the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse three hundred and six).

In light of the missing Heramba Vināyaka it is interesting to note that both Martin-Dubost and Yadav include a photo of another Heramba Vināyaka statue in Banaras. The *mūrti* concerned is situated in Viśvanāth *gali* and is dated by Martin-Dubost (1997:181) as sixteenth to seventeenth century. Yadav (1997: 37) also includes it in her work but she does not refer to it as Heramba but as another Pañcamukha Vināyaka. The main reason why Martin-Dubost refers to this image as Heramba is the fact that there is a lion at the right foot of the statue. In Chapter Five of this thesis further details will be provided about this five faced Vināyaka figure as it is situated in a shrine above Dhuṇḍhirāja Vināyaka and there is a controversy as to whether this five-headed Vināyaka is Dhuṇḍhi.

III. 6. Vighnarāja Vināyaka (22) (page 68). 'The King of Obstacles'. Located on the Citrakūṭ well, J 12/32 (Sukul 1977:359; Vyās 1987:91). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'For the success of the wise one should worship the Gaṇapati named Vighnarāja who destroys all obstacles. He is stationed to the south of Vikaṭadanta' (57:85). Vighnarāja is also mentioned by the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse three hundred and thirty).

This image is about eighty centimetres in height and seated in *lalitāsana*. He is seated on a lotus seat, with the right leg dangling over a seat. His ears are small compared with the size of his head. On his head he wears a helmet-shaped crown with a clear flower petal base. A third eye, a gleaming modern version, is set in the front of the crown. The trunk is turned towards the left and goes upwards, as if to touch the object (probably a *modaka*) held in the left upper hand. His ears are rounded and rather small compared with the rest of his body. In the right upper hand he carries an axe. The lower hands are resting on the knees and carry a rosary in the

²⁸⁷ Bühnemann (1989:26-27; 33-35). Again Heramba Vināyaka is described as riding on a lion, he has five heads and ten arms in which he carries a goad, a rosary, an axe, a *modaka* and the well-wishing *mudrā* on the right side and in his left hands he has a trident, a mace, a skull, a tusk and the protective *mudrā*. The date of the *Vidyārṇava Tantra* is estimated around 1726 CE.

²⁸⁸ D. C. Sircar 1972-1973:202-204. The text is dated to the first half of the eighteenth century.

²⁸⁹ For a detailed description, see Pal (1981:125). The *Tantrasāra* knows two slight variations of Heramba Vināyaka which are described by the author. The main characteristic of Heramba Vināyaka is that his vehicle is never a rat but a lion. The lion vehicle is also found in the iconography of Gaṇeśa in Kashmir, Afghanistan and Nepal.

right hand and a book in the left. On the body are traces of what could be a *yajñopavīta*, but it also could be a fine necklace. Around his wrists are bracelets. The statue has two small tusks. On the whole the statue is rather flat and the potbelly does not protrude. Apart from a *yajñopavīta* his ornaments consist of some bracelets and some ankle bands.

The overall impression of this statue is that it is a modern *mūrti*: there is absolutely no trace of any grace or flexibility and the presence of the book and the lotus seat on which he is seated date this figure the modern period. Apart from the statue itself, the entire background depicting an arch and a bell and the flowerleaf pattern at the base, is modern and can till today be found in newly-constructed temples in Banaras.

III. 7. Varada Vināyaka (23) (page 69). 'The Vināyaka who grants boons or fulfils wishes'. This Vināyaka, whose statue reveals only half of the body, is situated in a roadside shrine on the road to Prahlād *ghāṭ*, A 13/19 (Sukul 1977:355; Vyās 1987:91). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'A little to the north-west of Rājaputra Vināyaka one should do the *pūjā* of Varada Vināyaka who gives boons when praised with steady devotion' (57:86). The function of this Vināyaka corresponds with his name and Varada's present location corresponds to the location in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. His name occurs in the *Tristhalīsetu* and the *Tīrthaprakāśa* but is omitted from the *Merutantra*.

The figure is about forty centimetres in height and its dilapidated state suggests that it may have been removed from debris and put in a new shrine. A quick glance at the statue suggests that this *mūrti* shares many similarities with the *svayambhū* forms of the deity, such as the ones representing the Aṣṭa Vināyakas. In fact Varada Vināyaka shows a great resemblance to the Siddhi Vināyaka of Siddhatek in Maharashtra.²⁹⁰ Despite the fact that he is only half-represented it is likely that he was originally depicted seated. He is bare-headed and has an extremely big forehead on which a modern third eye is placed. The trunk is very broad and is turned towards the left. The ears are set against the back of the head although this may also be the result of the erosion which has occurred over the years. It appears that the statue originally had only two hands and this, along with the bare head, is indicative of the first period, to which this statue is here assigned.

III. 8. Modakapriya Vināyaka (24) (page 70). 'The *modaka*-loving Vināyaka'. Situated in the Ādimahādeva temple, A 3/92, at the back of Trilocana *ghāṭ*. (Sukul 1977:356; Vyās 1987:91).²⁹¹ The relevant verse of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* is: 'The Gaṇeśa Modakapriya is

²⁹⁰ Until this date the Aṣṭa Vināyakas have been only discussed as to their socio-religious importance in Maharashtra. No scholar has made an attempt to date the eight *svayambhū* statues and thus any reference to them has no iconographical value.

²⁹¹ Sukul claims that this Vināyaka was moved from the Rajghat area to its present location (1977:356), but he does not provide any evidence to support this theory.

stationed to the south of Praṇavavighneśa on the auspicious bank of the celestial river in the Piśaṅgila *tīrtha*.²⁹² He is worthy of being adored' (57:87). His name is included in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse three hundred and sixty).

The statue is forty centimetres in height. In its present state it seems as if the legs have been amputated from the image. Modakapriya does not wear a crown, but the slight elevation on the head indicates that he may have once had a topknot. The temples and trunk bone protrude slightly. The trunk is turned towards the left and the way it is carved suggests that it originally touched a *modaka pātra*. Because of the presence of the upper right hand, holding an unidentifiable attribute, it appears that Modakapriya Vināyaka was originally represented with four hands. The lower right hand seems to have rested on the knee. At the left side there is no trace left of any hand or attribute. Because of its delapidated state no *yajñopavīta* or other ornament is visible. Judging by what is visible, this statue belongs to the first period. The elephantine bare head, the trunk which curls in a natural way and the presence of the four hands suggest that it should be dated to around the tenth century.

IV. 1. Abhaya Vināyaka (25). (page 71). 'The Protecting Vināyaka'. The *abhaya* is a *mudrā* symbolising 'protection'. The statue of Abhaya Vināyaka is found in the Śūladanteśvara temple on Prayāga *ghāṭ*, D 18/111. Abhaya is the first of the two Vināyaka statues found against the right wall of the temple as one enters (Sukul 1977:357; Vyās 1987:91). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'On the bank of the heavenly river, to the north of Vakratuṇḍa Vināyaka is Abhayaprada Vināyaka, the reassurer of those who are afraid' (57:89). Here the name of the Vināyaka reflects his function, and its present position which is on Prayāga *ghāṭ* also corresponds with the text. However, the Śūladanteśvara temple in which the image is set is not very old, perhaps nineteenth century (Harishankar 1996:200) and it is clear that Abhaya Vināyaka was placed in the temple at a later date, thus suggesting that his original location was somewhere nearby. He is mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse three hundred and sixty-nine).

The image has a height of about sixty centimetres and sits in the *lalitāsana* position. He has a topknot on his head. The temples and the trunkbone protrude slightly. The trunk is turned towards the left. Because of its age, the image is quite damaged and the attributes in the four hands are beyond recognition. However, from the position of the left lower hand it does not seem that the Vināyaka held a pot with sweetmeats. The ears are large and, at both sides of the trunk, he seems to have two small tusks. Two eyes are discernible. The feet and the potbelly are flat and on the belly no *yajñopavīta* can be discerned, neither are any ornaments visible. The stylistic features, namely the bare elephant head and the trunk which is twisted in a natural way

²⁹² The Piśaṅgila *tīrtha* corresponds with the area around Trilocana *ghāṭ* (personal communication with paṇḍit Vyāsa).

indicate its antiquity. Because of the four hands it is dated between the tenth and the twelfth century.

IV. 2. Simhatuṇḍa Vināyaka (26) (page 72). 'The Vināyaka with the Lion's Snout'. His *mūrti* is found in the Brahmeśvara temple situated in Khalispura D 33/66. The statue itself is located below street level and is about forty centimetres in height (Sukul 1977:357; Vyās 1987:91). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'To the north of Ekadanta is the Vināyaka named Simhatuṇḍa who destroys the elephants in the form of obstacles of the inhabitants of Vārāṇasī' (57:90). Despite his name meaning 'lion's snout' there is no iconographic feature which matches this although it could be argued that the name is symbolic for his function as the one dealing with a mass (elephants) of calamities. His name is mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse three hundred and seventy-seven).

The shape of Simhatuṇḍa's head is very strange, as if he originally wore a crown which is almost completely eroded. Alternatively, he may have worn a head band. The forehead bulges slightly. He has two eyes which seem to be modern additions and the trunk turns towards the left, touching the *modaka pātra*. The base of the trunk is very broad and un-elephant like. Simhatuṇḍa is seated in the *lalitāsana* position and is represented with four hands. The upper right hand holds a noose and the upper left holds a lotus. The lower left hand carries a bowl with sweetmeats and the right lower hand rests on his knee. Because of the layers of vermilion paint it is not clear whether he is also holding a rosary in this hand or not. It also is not possible to detect whether he originally wore a *yajñopavīta* or any ornaments. The lower part of the statue, the legs and feet, are very thin and disproportionate.

This statue is difficult to date. The apparent lack of a crown could indicate that it belongs to the thirteenth or fourteenth century while the twist of the trunk and the artificial back arms indicates two to three centuries later. Accordingly, here this Vināyaka is assigned to the third period.

IV. 3. Kūṇṭākṣi Vināyaka (27). (page 73). 'The Vināyaka with the Closed Eyes'. The word *kūṇṭita* means 'contracted, closed or shut' (MW:299). The large statue of this Vināyaka is found in house no. 52/38 at Lakṣmī *kuṇḍa* (Sukul 1977:358; Vyās 1987:91). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'In the north-eastern direction of Trimukha Vināyaka is Kūṇṭākṣi Vināyaka, he is protecting the Mahāśmaśāna from the evil eye of the wicked' (57:91). The *Khaṇḍa* does not say much about the position of this Vināyaka. His name is listed in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and in the *Merutantra* where he is named as Kupitākṣa (verse three hundred and eighty-five).

The statue is about one metre thirty centimetres in height and is kept behind a fence. Kūṇitākṣi Vināyaka is seated in the *lalitāsana* position and wears a crown of the type *karaṇḍa mukuṭa*. Under his third eye is a silver *candra bindu*. He has two tusks and his trunk is curved towards the left, the two lips of the trunk clearly visible. The wide open silver-coloured eyes are in contradiction to the meaning of his name. Around his belly is a prominent *nāgayajñopavīta* and at his right foot a little mouse is visible. He has four hands. The upper right hand carries an attribute which resembles a fan. In the left hand he holds a lotus and the lower right hand holds a round attribute which could be either a *modaka* or a pomegranate. In the fourth hand he holds a book or palm leaf manuscript. He wears ankle rings and ornaments around his upper arms as well.

Kūṇitākṣi is, without doubt, one of the most beautiful Vināyaka statues among the fifty-six. The height and clarity of the carving are in sharp contrast to some of the other damaged and formless Vināyakas. These sharp and clear features indicate that the statue is not very old; the earliest possible date would be the eighteenth century although the nineteenth or even the twentieth century seem more likely. The size and detail of the statue indicate that the artist was commissioned to make a statue of an ordinary Gaṇeśa instead of Kūṇitākṣi Vināyaka.

IV. 4. Kṣipraprasādana Vināyaka (28) (page 74). 'The Vināyaka who gives Quick *prasāda*'. He is situated in the Pitareśvara Mahādeva temple in Pitara *kuṇḍa*, C 18/47 (Sukul 1977:358; Vyās 1987:91). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'Kṣipraprasādana, stationed to the east of Pañcāśya, will protect the city. *Siddhis* shall be quickly attained by the worship of Kṣipraprasādana' (57:92). This Vināyaka's ability to grant boons quickly is reflected in his name. Kṣipraprasādana Vināyaka is also mentioned in the eighteenth century *Vidyārṇava Tantra* where he is one of the fourteen forms of Gaṇeśa. He is there described as having four arms, carrying a spear in the upper right hand and a noose in the upper left hand. The lower right hand holds a lotus and the lower left a tusk. His trunk holds a lemon. (Bühnemann 1989:33-35). In Banaras Kṣipraprasādana Vināyaka's iconographical features, however, do not correspond with this text. His name is also mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse four hundred and twenty).

The statue is barely thirty centimetres in height. The crown on his head is vertical and, because of erosion and layers of vermillion, appears to be an extension of the head. On his forehead is a small moon-like crescent which protrudes slightly. He has two small eyes and tusks. His ears are square and set at the back of the head, carved into the background stone. The trunk turns towards the left at an angle of ninety degrees and touches the sweetmeats held by the lower left hand. The upper right hand is holding an attribute which cannot be identified properly: it could be a lotus or a noose. On the other side the attribute is the axe. The lower

right hand rests on a knee but, as in many cases, it is not clear whether he also holds a rosary in this hand. The statue shows no traces of a *yajñopavīta* or decorative ornaments.

Without a detailed inspection of the image it could be argued that this Vināyaka could belong to the transitional period but the vertical crown and the sharp bends in the trunk indicate otherwise. This Vināyaka is therefore dated to the third period, possibly the sixteenth century.

IV. 5. Cintāmaṇi Vināyaka (29) (page 75). 'The Wishing-Jewel Vināyaka'. This a name frequently given to Vināyaka. In Banaras alone there are no less than four Cintāmaṇi Vināyakas.²⁹³ The Cintāmaṇi statue of the fifty-six Vināyakas is set in a small temple on the east side of the Īśvaraṅgā well, K 86/42 (Sukul 1977:359; Vyās 1987:91). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'To the south-east of Heramba, Cintāmaṇi Vināyaka is stationed. He is like a *cintāmaṇi* (wish-granting stone) unto the devotees. He will directly present to the devotees whatever is desired by them' (57:93). His name is also listed in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse four hundred and thirty-one).

The statue is about one metre in height and although most of it is covered by a cloth, some of its features are indicative of its date. This Vināyaka is bare-headed and the trunk bone juts out, a feature which was fairly common by the eighth and ninth centuries. Another such example of a protruding trunk bone was found on a fifth century *bāla* Gaṇeśa from Badami (Nagar 1992:plate 2). Later examples are found in a seventh century Gaṇeśa with consorts in Mathura, an eighth century Gaṇeśa from Biccavol and a tenth century statue from Bharatpur (Sivaramamurti 1950:28; Nagar 1992:plate 5). Also peculiar is the fact that he is represented in a position which could be described as the inverse *lalitāsana*, the left leg is folded and pulled up, whereas the right leg lies in front of him. He has two eyes. Despite the yellow cloth covering up his whole body it is possible to see that Cintāmaṇi has four arms. The attributes, however, are unknown.

The lack of a crown and the protruding trunk bone place this statue in the period between the eighth and the tenth century. Considering its reasonable height and its location in an area where there has been a dominant Muslim population for centuries it can be argued that Cintāmaṇi is one of the rare cases which survived the upheavals of history. Either this *mūrti* is not the original Vināyaka, or it was hidden during the period of Muslim iconoclasm. There is the slight possibility, however, that the statue was brought from somewhere else, but, considering its size and, possibly also, its weight, it could not have been too far away.

²⁹³ All four Cintāmaṇi Vināyakas are mentioned by Vyās (1987:187).

IV. 6. Dantahasta Vināyaka (30) (page 76). 'The Vināyaka Holding his Tusk'. This Vināyaka is currently found in the complex of the Baḍe Gaṇeśa temple in Loṭṭiya, K 58/102 (Sukul 1977:359; Vyās 1987:91). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'South of Vighnarāja is Dantahasta Gaṇeśa. He puts thousands of obstacles to harass the men who hate Vārāṇasī' (57:94). The Vināyaka is mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaparakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse four hundred and forty).

The statue is about half a metre high and the most obvious feature is that there is another small statue, with big white eyes, is seated on the lap of Vināyaka. Close examination reveals that it is a mouse or a rat.²⁹⁴ This Vināyaka seems to be bare-headed with enormous ears. However, closer inspection reveals that this Vināyaka actually once wore a crown in the style of the sixteenth or seventeenth century. He has two white eyes which are probably recent additions. His trunk is hanging downwards over his torso. It seems as if the mouse is held in the left hand which is resting on the lap. The right arm is brought to the face of the Vināyaka, thus explaining its name 'holding his tusk'. There are two more arms at the back of the statue but because of the vermilion their attributes cannot be distinguished. His position is also difficult to determine. It seems to be a combination of the *lalitāsana* and a cross-legged pose. A horizontal line seems to divide the body into an upper and lower part. Because of the many layers of vermilion it is impossible to distinguish a *yajñopavīta* and other ornaments.

The presence of the rodent vehicle in the hand of the Vināyaka and the thick layer of vermilion covering the features cause a problem in dating the statue. However, the trunk and the typical crown with flower petal motif classify this statue to the third period.

IV. 7. Piciṇḍila Vināyaka (31) (page 77). 'The Corpulent Vināyaka' (MW:624). The *mūrti* is located on Prahlāda *ghāṭ*, outside the temple, A 10/80. The statue stands in a shrine alongside the stairs leading to the *ghāṭ* and is about fifty centimetres high (Sukul 1977:355; Vyās 1987:91). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'The Lord named Piciṇḍila is to the south-west of Varada. He is surrounded by *yātudhānas* and protects the city day and night' (57:95). He is mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaparakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse four hundred and forty-nine).

The statue is a mixture of styles. Vināyaka is represented standing with legs slightly bent in an deformed *tribhaṅga* position as it is clear that the artist did not quite manage to represent a correct *tribhaṅga* pose. The temples bulge slightly as does the trunk bone. His crown consists of a base with flower petals. He has big ears and the trunk turns towards the left and touches the *modaka pātra* which is held in the left lower hand. This hand seems to be resting on

²⁹⁴ The priest of the Baḍe Gaṇeśa temple believes that the image is one of Lakṣmī.

another figure which is also standing. The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* refers to these attendants as 'yātudhānas'. Here it should be noted that representations of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa together with attendants was not uncommon and are found from the sixth century onwards. The Gaṇeśa figure from Samalaji depicting Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa together with a *gaṇa* is such an example (Martin-Dubost 1997:266, plate 5; Yadav 1997:plate 83). The left upper hand holds a stylised lotus flower. On the right side the two attributes are a noose in the upper hand and a round object, a *modaka* or a pomegranate, in the lower hand. The lower hand rests against the hip. On his lower right arm he wears an ornament. The feet have ankle rings and all the toes are visible. It is not clear however, whether this Vināyaka was originally represented with a *yajñopavīta*. At the right foot a small image of a mouse can be seen.

Piciṇḍila Vināyaka has some characteristics of the earliest representations of Vināyaka but the statue clearly lacks the flexibility of that period. The crown with the flower petal motif, the rather artificial looking hands and the stiff representation of the limbs make it clear that it should be dated much later. It is possible that it was sculptured at the end of the seventeenth century but nowhere else amongst the fifty-six Vināyakas does one encounter this peculiar mixture of features. This Vināyaka is therefore assigned to the modern period with the possibility that it was produced as late as the twentieth century with the artist deliberately aiming to give it stylistic features of an earlier great age.²⁹⁵ It needs to be said that the artist making this Vināyaka must have taken some information from the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* concerning the attendants of this Vināyaka. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that this Vināyaka was commissioned to replace an earlier version. Although there is little doubt that the current statue is modern, it may have been modelled on an earlier version which also represented the *yātudhānas* or demons. Piciṇḍila leans on some smaller figures which could not properly be identified and they might be these demons. The name is definitely not reflected in the iconography of the Vināyaka, but the representation of the club as an attribute may be an indication of his protective role. Today the Vināyaka is situated on the bank of the river but, since this is not mentioned in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* which usually gives a riverbank location, it is probably that its original place was not on the *ghāt*. The Prahlāda *ghāt* area was frequently destroyed by the Muslims.

IV. 8. Uddaṇḍamuṇḍa Vināyaka (32) (page 78). 'The Vināyaka Carrying a Stick (*uddaṇḍa*)'. The small statue of this Vināyaka is found at the back of the shrine of Vārāṇasī Devī in the Trilocana temple, 2/80 on the top of Trilocana *ghāt*. (Sukul 1977:356; Vyās 1987:92).²⁹⁶ The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'On the Pilipilā *tīrtha* to the south of Modakapriya is Uddaṇḍamuṇḍa Vināyaka. What is it that he does not bestow on devotees when visited?'

²⁹⁵ Piciṇḍila Vināyaka is dated to the nineteenth century by V. P. Singh (1990:plate 186).

²⁹⁶ Because of the size of the statue and its obscure position in the corner of another shrine it was not possible to produce a picture of this statue.

(57:96). The present position of the Vināyaka corresponds with the information given by the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. The Pilipilā *tīrtha* is the vicinity of Trilocana *ghāt*. The iconography does not correspond to the Vināyaka's name. His name is mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse four hundred and fifty-five).

The statue is no bigger than twenty centimetres and is very damaged. The form of the head suggests that he wears a crown in the style of the sixteenth to seventeenth century. The ears have merged with the background panel. It is clear that he is represented sitting but it is not clear whether it is in the *lalitāsana* or just cross-legged. The trunk is turned through ninety degrees and bends towards the right. He has four hands. The lower right hand is holding the sweetmeats and the upper one is holding an attribute which could be an axe. On the left side the attributes are not identifiable. Because of its dilapidated state it is also impossible to determine whether there was originally a *yajñopavīta*.

The vague contours of the crown suggest that the statue should probably be dated later than the seventeenth century. The sharp bends in the trunk further emphasis this. However, since it cannot be decided whether this statue is seventeenth- or, rather early eighteenth-century, it is here classified as belonging to the fourth period.

V. 1. Sthūladanta Vināyaka (33) (page 79). 'Vināyaka with the Thick Tusk'. The very damaged statue of this Vināyaka is found on Mān Mandir *ghāt*, in a little temple in number D 16/34 (Sukul 1977:357; Vyās 1987:92). In the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* it is written: 'The *gaṇeśāna* named Sthūladanta is stationed on the bank of the heavenly river to the north of Abhayaprada. To the good he bestows enormous success' (57:98). The geographical information provided by the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* is still valid: the iconographical features, however, do not correspond to his name. His function as the bestower of success is unspecified. He is also mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse four hundred and sixty-one).

The statue is about thirty centimetres high and is the most damaged of all the fifty-six Vināyakas. Although the *liṅga* in the temple is still worshipped, the Vināyaka is not venerated anymore, possibly because of its dilapidated state. The only feature suggesting this was a Vināyaka is the potbelly and even this has been cut in half. The trunk is chopped off and the ears have also disappeared. The figure is seated in the *lalitāsana* position with the right hand resting on the knee. This hand may have originally held an *akṣamālā*. The left hand also rests on the knee. It is not clear whether this Vināyaka statue has two or four hands, but if the slight bulging above the right hand was once a hand or an arm, then it is possible that he had four hands. Because of the damaged state of the statue, it is futile to try and determine whether he also wears a *yajñopavīta* and other ornaments.

The damaged state of this Vināyaka makes it difficult to date but it certainly lacks the plasticity of the first phase. The contours of the belly and the limbs suggest that it could possibly belong to the sixteenth or seventeenth century, and it is therefore provisionally assigned to the third period.

V. 2. Kalipriya Vināyaka (34) (page 80). 'The Vināyaka who is Fond of Quarrelling'. This Vināyaka is located in the Manaprakāmeśvara temple, situated in a small alley opposite Sākṣī Vināyaka D 10/50 (Sukul 1977:357; Vyās 1987:92). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'North of Simhatuṇḍa is the Vināyaka Kalipriya who creates natural quarrels for those who harass the pilgrims' (57:99). He is mentioned by the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse four hundred and seventy-two).

The statue is about twenty centimetres in height and is seated in the *lalitāsana* position. The statue is heavily smeared with *sindūr*, making identification of the different attributes difficult. He is bare-headed but the temples and the protruding trunk bone are clear. The contours of the ears are sharp. The trunk turns towards the right and seems to be holding a *modaka*. A similar feature is also found in the statue of Kūṭadanta Vināyaka (Appendix, page 56). The trunk is prominent, thus creating the impression that it was made at a fairly early stage but the position of the trunk contradicts this. This Vināyaka has four arms, holding an axe and a lotus flower in the upper right and left hand. The lower hands both rest on the knees but the attributes are obscure. The uneven surface of the stone on the left leg makes it appear as if he holds a rosary on that side. The rough surface also makes it difficult to discern a *yajñopavīta* or any other ornaments.

Before entering the temple, there is another Vināyaka statue in a shrine near the entrance. His features are also to be dated to the sixteenth or seventeenth century. The trunk twists towards the right, he wears a distinctive crown with flower petals on the base and has four hands, holding an axe and a lotus in the upper hands and the two lower hands are placed on the knees. Some local residents believe that this statue is the 'real' Kalipriya Vināyaka. However, as the location of the fifty-six Vināyakas is established according to the work of Vyāsa and Kedarnātha, the statue in the temple is considered to be the one that belongs to the group of fifty-six.

The lack of flexibility in the statue, together with the upwards-going trunk and the disconnected back arms suggest that this *mūrti* cannot be dated before the sixteenth century and it is therefore assigned to the third period.

V. 3. Caturdanta Vināyaka (35) (page 81). 'The Vināyaka with the Four Tusks'. This peculiar statue, unique amongst its kind, is found in a niche outside the temple of the

Sanātanadharma school on Nayī Sarak, D 49/10 (Sukul 1977:358; Vyās 1987:92). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'The Vināyaka named Caturdanta is on the north-east of Kūṇitākṣa. Masses of obstacles shall disappear merely by visiting this Lord' (57:100). His name is mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse four hundred and eighty-three).

The statue is not more than forty centimetres high and represents Vināyaka with four tusks. On the right side two can clearly be distinguished. There appears to be another in the middle and a fourth one on the left side of the face. On his head he wears a crown. From the contours of the crown it can be assumed that it is a typical sixteenth- to seventeenth-century model, namely a fine base with a flower-petal structure on top of it. The ears are triangular and rather small. Caturdanta Vināyaka is depicted cross-legged and his torso has a well-defined appearance. It is clear from the way the body is shaped that the Vināyaka never had a potbelly. He has four arms but the attributes of the upper arms are not identifiable: possibly a lotus flower and an axe, but there is no proof for this. Both lower arms rest on his knees, giving the impression that he is meditating. It seems as if he is holding a rosary in the right hand but the surface of the stone is so rough that it is difficult to be certain. The surface also makes it impossible to state whether the Vināyaka may have been wearing a *yajñopavīta* or other ornaments. On the base the vague contours of a mouse are discernible.

Whereas Agarwala (1977) includes several peculiar forms of Vināyakas, he does not mention Caturdanta. Martin-Dubost, on the other hand, devotes a small paragraph to four-headed Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa statues.²⁹⁷ According to him, references to four-faced or 'vidhi' Gaṇapatis are found in the *Ajitāgama* (*Paṭala* LV, *śloka* 7). Vidhi Gaṇapati symbolises the four Vedas, the day of Gaṇeśa's birth and his worship on the fourth of *bhādrapad*. The *Ajitāgama* describes the attributes as being the palm-leaf manuscript, the rosary, the staff and a *kamaṇḍalu*. The only recognisable attribute of the Banaras image of Caturdanta Vināyaka is the rosary.

A reference to Caturdanta Vināyaka already occurs in the twelfth century in the *Tīrthavivecana Khaṇḍa* of Lakṣmīdhara²⁹⁸ but it is clear that Lakṣmīdhara cannot have referred to this particular image of the Vināyaka because the crown and the shape of the head are typical for the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries. Here this Vināyaka is assigned to the third period.

²⁹⁷ As seen in the case of the Pañcamukha Vināyaka, the tusk of the deity often also represents the head. In this case, the four-tusked Vināyaka can equally be regarded as a four-headed Vināyaka.

²⁹⁸ The *Vrata Khaṇḍa* of the KKT (pages 84-87) quotes from a reference in the *Narasimha Purāṇa* about the Gaṇeśa Caturthi *vrata*. Hereby Gaṇeśa is described as having one, two or four heads and as having four arms (Kane 1968-1974, volume V: 149).

V. 4. Dvimukha Vināyaka (36) (page 82). 'The Two-faced Vināyaka'. His statue is set in the wall of a temple at the edge of *Sūrya kuṇḍa*, number D 51/90 (Sukul 1977:358; Vyās 1987:92). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'East of Kṣipraprasādana is Dvituṇḍa who shines with such lustre both from the front and from the back' (57:101). The present Dvimukha Vināyaka does not correspond to the above quotation either in name or in characteristics. Dvimukha is also mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu* and the *Tīrthaprakāśa*. The *Merutantra* mentions him under the name of Dvituṇḍākṣa (verse four hundred and ninety-five).

This double-faced Vināyaka is not more than forty centimetres high. Dvimukha Vināyaka is very damaged and it is necessary to look closely to see that it is indeed a representation of the elephant-faced god. The two faces are not very clear but the two trunks at both sides suggest a double face. The elevation of the head and the carving of lines indicate that he is wearing a crown. He is seated in the lotus position. Of the four arms only three are clear: the lower left arm is indistinguishable from the body of the statue. In his upper right hand he holds an axe and the lower one rests on his knees. The upper left hand seems to hold a lotus flower.²⁹⁹ The way the lower right hand falls over the knee suggests that he may have held an *akṣamālā*, but if this was so then the contours of the rosary have eroded. The two back arms seem to be disconnected from the body. This Vināyaka is represented with a protruding belly on which a *yajñopavīta* cannot be discerned. From the hands and the feet it does not look as if this Dvimukha Vināyaka ever wore ankle rings or bracelets.

Because of the disconnected back arms, the style of the crown and the lotus position, the date suggested for this Vināyaka is the third period, possibly the sixteenth or seventeenth century. This dating agrees with that advanced by P. K. Agarwala (1977 (a):154) and by M. N. Tiwari (personal communication).³⁰⁰ Martin-Dubost (1997:177), however, believes that the statue can be dated to the fourteenth century, but since the statue does not have any transitional features this proposed date seems very unlikely. The author does not provide any proof for his statement.

V. 5. Jyeṣṭha Vināyaka (37) (page 83). 'The Eldest Vināyaka'. (The name *jyeṣṭha* has several meanings, for example 'the best' as well as 'the eldest'). The statue is situated in one of the walls of the Jyeṣṭheśvara temple in Kāśīpura, K 62/144, and is coated with bright coloured paint (Sukul 1977:359; Vyās 1987:92). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'The Gaṇādhyaṁkṣa

²⁹⁹P. K. Agarwala believes that the attribute held by Dvimukha Vināyaka in the upper left hand is a *mūlaka* or radish or a broken tooth (1977 (a):154).

³⁰⁰Professor Tiwari lives on the edge of *Sūrya kuṇḍa* and is well aware of the antiquity of some of the stone remains around the *kuṇḍa*. Similarly to *Lakṣmī kuṇḍa*, the remains around *Sūrya kuṇḍa* are as old as the ninth or tenth century. A picture of some solar disks can be found in Eck (1993:181).

named Jyeṣṭha is the eldest of my numerous sons. He is stationed to the south-east of Cintāmaṇi Vināyaka. For the acquisition of surpassing excellence he should be well adored on the fourteenth day in the bright half of Jyeṣṭha' (57:102-103). His name is mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse four hundred and ninety-five).

The statue is about forty centimetres high and on his head the Vināyaka is wearing a very modest crown which has the form of a cap. He stands in the *tribhaṅga* position and leans on a club. His head is slightly turned and his trunk, hanging over his belly, is curled towards the right. He only has two arms and the left hand carries a round attribute, possibly a *modaka*. His right hand leans on the club. He has two eyes and fan-shaped ears. His body is slender. The folds of the cloth draped over his shoulder, falling beside the club, are a noticeable feature. Folds are also visible on the left thigh and between the legs. The strong colours give this figure a modern look but the *tribhaṅga* position, the two arms and the leaning on the club indicate that it is a very old statue which is overpainted. In the Dhubela museum there is a similar statue of the tenth century and it is possible to argue therefore that Jyeṣṭha Vināyaka is from the same period (A. Banerji 1993:13). The antiquity of Jyeṣṭha Vināyaka was also confirmed by M.N. Tiwari, Mrs K. Giri and Mrs Devangana Desai (personal communication). Jyeṣṭha Vināyaka greatly resembles a Gaṇeśa and Śakti figure from Dhaud (Rajasthan, tenth century). The crown and the stance are the same, but the Dhaud statue is attended by a Śakti figure on the left side while the lower right hand seems to caress a smaller *yakṣa* figure at the right side (Martin-Dubost 1997:151, plate 56).

V. 6. Gaja Vināyaka (38) (page 84). 'The Elephant Vināyaka'. This Vināyaka is located in the Rāja Darwāza area, in the Bhārbhūteśvara temple number 54/44 (Sukul 1977:359; Vyās 1987:92). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* reads: 'To the south of Dantahasta Vināyaka is Gaja Vināyaka. By worshipping him devoutly, prosperity in elephants will be attained' (57:104). His name occurs in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse four hundred and ninety-five).

The statue is thirty-five centimetres high and partly damaged. On his head he wears a topknot. The ears merge with the background panel and the eyes are very deep, suggesting that the statue has been covered by layers of vermilion paint. The trunk turns towards the left and probably once touched the sweetmeats but the left hand holding the *modaka pātra* is eroded. In the upper left hand he holds an unidentifiable object. On the right side the situation is equally obscure. The upper right hand's attribute could be anything from an axe to a lotus or a *pāśa*. The lower hand and arm merge with the body but it could possibly be resting on the knees. Whether this Vināyaka is in lotus position or in the *lalitāsana* is unclear. In general it can be said that the statue lacks plasticity. The smooth surface of the Vināyaka suggests that he does not wear a *yajñopavīta* or any ornaments.

Dating this Vināyaka is difficult. The topknot and its damaged condition suggest that he belongs to the first period, but the turning of his trunk and the lack of plasticity in the limbs indicate a later origin. Here this Vināyaka is assigned to the third period.

V. 7. Kāla Vināyaka (39) (page 85). 'The Black Vināyaka'. This sixty centimetre high statue is found under a tree besides the staircase leading to Rāma *ghāt*, in front of house K 24/10 (Sukul, 1977:355; Vyās 1987:92). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states 'Kāla Vināyaka is to the south of the Gaṇapati named Piciṇḍila. By resorting to him, men will not be afraid of the dark' (57:105). The name of the Vināyaka explains its function as the one who overcomes the darkness of death. Kāla Vināyaka's present position is south of Piciṇḍila, although the statue has definitely been moved. It has been argued by Sukul that his original position must have been between Prahlāda *ghāt* and Gola *ghāt*. Again, no evidence for this statement is given. Another reference in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'Beyond it is the Kālagāṅgā that destroys the sins of the Kali Age. A sensible man who bathes there becomes rid of sins instantly' (KKH 84:67). Sukul believes that the reference to the Kālagāṅgā *tīrtha* also indicates the position of Kāla Vināyaka, namely that the latter was already located in his present position at the time the *Khaṇḍa* was written (Sukul 1977:356). The Vināyaka is also mentioned by the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse four hundred and ninety-six).

The figure of Kāla Vināyaka is one of those belonging to the first period. His current position under the tree is probably not the original location. He stands in the *tribhaṅga* position without a crown but with a topknot. The head is shaped like that of an elephant, with the temples slightly protruding and the trunk is turned towards the left and touches the *modaka pātra* held by the left hand. His right arm rests on a club or a thick stick. In comparison with his torso the legs are short and dwarfish. He wears a loincloth of which the folds are visible just below the knees. His ears are big and fan shaped. The whole setting of this Vināyaka, the arch above his head and the two pillars besides him, give the impression that this *mūrti* has been taken from a larger work. Here there is some similarity with Gajakarṇa Vināyaka (see *supra*).

The dwarfish appearance, the two arms and the curves of the body classify this figure as belonging to the first period, around the ninth or tenth century. Plate seventy-nine in the Yadav's work (1997) shows a similar statue in the *tribhaṅga* pose which is dated to the ninth century.

V. 8. Nāgeśa Vināyaka (40) (page 86). 'Lord of the Snakes'. Located in the Nāgeśvara temple on Bhoṁsla *ghāt* (Sukul 1977:356; Vyās 1987:92). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'The devotee is honoured in the Nāgaloka by visiting the Gaṇapa named Nāgeśa stationed in the southern direction from the Vināyaka Uddāṇḍamuṇḍa' (57:106). Currently the Nāgeśa temple is

situated on Bhoṁsla *ghāṭ* but originally this temple, and probably also the Vināyaka, were in the Nāgeśa *tīrtha*, which is now Mehta *ghāṭ*³⁰¹ (Sukul 1977:356). The temple in which Nāgeśa Vināyaka is situated is a very small structure which does not seem to be very old. He is mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse four hundred and ninety-six).

The forty centimetre high statue has all the characteristics of a recent statue. The crown on his head is stylistically late with the base representing flower petals. Just under the crown is a pearl head band. The temples protrude slightly as does the trunk bone. His trunk is turned towards the right and touches the *modakas* in the right lower hand. In the right upper hand he carries an axe. The two other attributes at the left side are a lotus flower and a rosary in the lower hand which rests on the knee. Across his belly is a *nāgayajñopavīta*. He has two eyes and fan-shaped ears. Apart from the fine pearl head band he does not seem to have any other ornaments.

The black polished stone, the clear contours of the attributes, the crown and the slightly stiffened position leave no doubt that this statue belongs to the eighteenth or nineteenth century.

VI.³⁰² 1. **Maṇikarṇa Vināyaka (41)** (page 87). The Vināyaka owes its name to the location where it is situated, in the vicinity of Maṇikarṇikā *ghāṭ*. The Vināyaka is in a shrine next to the staircase leading to the place where wood is stored for the burning *ghāṭs* (Sukul 1977:356; Vyās 1987:92). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'The Vināyaka named Maṇikarṇa is the destroyer of obstacles in the east' (57:108). Whereas in the descriptions of the previous Vināyakas there was some indication of their relative location, this no longer applies to the Vināyakas of the sixth and seventh circles. The position of Maṇikarṇa in the east of the city corresponds with the text, however. The Vināyaka is mentioned by the *Tristhalīsetu* the *Tīrthaprakāśa* but is omitted by the *Merutantra*.

The statue is just under one metre high, and wears a detachable silver crown. His head turns awkwardly towards the right. The base of the trunk is very broad and beside the trunk are two small tusks. The ears are rectangular and his eyes are large and set against the slopes of his cheeks. Because the eyes are white it can be assumed that they were a recent addition to the statue. The trunk is twisted towards the right and holds a *modaka*. He has four arms. In the

³⁰¹ Until 1960 Mehta *ghāṭ* was part of Rāma *ghāṭ* but with the construction of the Mehta hospital on the *ghāṭ* the name changed. The *ghāṭ* does not have any great religious importance today (Harishankar 1996:70).

³⁰² The description of the Vināyakas of the sixth circle is different from that of the others. Whereas for the other circles the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* always starts with the Vināyaka in the south-eastern direction, the sixth circle starts with the Vināyaka in the eastern direction (Maṇikarṇa Vināyaka).

upper right hand he holds an axe and in the upper left he carries a lotus flower. The lower right hand rests on his knee and the lower left grasps a palm leaf manuscript. The two back arms seem to be disconnected from the rest of the body. He is seated in the *lalitāsana* position and wears ankle rings on his feet. Because of the rough surface it cannot be discerned whether this Vināyaka was depicted with a *yajñopavīta* and any other ornaments.

This Vināyaka cannot be dated earlier than the eighteenth century. This is not only supported by the presence of the manuscript, but also the disconnected back arms.

VI. 2. Āśā Vināyaka (42) (page 88). 'The Vināyaka of Hope'. The statue of Āśā Vināyaka, about one metre high, is situated at the back of the Hanumān temple on Mīr *ghāt*, number D 3/59 (Sukul 1977:357; Vyās 1987:92). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'Āśā Vināyaka is stationed in the south-east and is fulfilling the hopes and desires of the devotees' (57:108). The name of the Vināyaka corresponds with his function as 'the granter of wishes'. His shrine is frequently visited by the many pilgrims. His name is mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu* and the *Tīrthaprakāśa* but, like Maṇikarṇa Vināyaka, he is omitted from the text of the *Merutantra*.

Āśā Vināyaka is a very popular Vināyaka in the religious life of Banaras. He is depicted in the *lalitāsana* position. His head is pointed which may indicate that under the layers of *sindūr* there is a small crown or a topknot. On special occasions a detachable silver crown is put on his head. His ears are small compared to his head. The trunk turns towards the right and does not touch anything. On his forehead is a *candrabindu* made of silver. The god has four hands but the attributes have become obscured under the layers of paint. The right upper hand is holding something which could be an axe or stylised lotus flower. The left side is very unclear but it seems that the lower left hand rests on the knee, maybe even holding a rosary. The whole statue is rotund: the trunk is round as are the legs. The smooth surface leaves no doubt that the Vināyaka is not wearing a *yajñopavīta* or any ornaments, although every day the god is bathed and smeared with vermilion, after which he is adorned with a real *yajñopavīta* and a *dhōti*. On special occasions he also wears a detachable silver crown. Earlier, when discussing Durga and Siddhi Vināyakas, it was suggested that they were copies of Āśā Vināyaka. Having completed the descriptions of these three Vināyakas it is clear that there are very few similarities between the three except that all three are statues of over a metre in height.

The size of the statue, as well as the turn of the trunk and the general roundness of his limbs, indicates that it belongs to the modern period, that is the nineteenth or even the twentieth century.

VI. 3 Sṛṣṭi Vināyaka (43) (page 89). 'The Vināyaka of Creation'. This small Vināyaka statue is set in a wall near house number D 8/3 in Kalikā *gali* (Sukul 1977:357; Vyās

1987:92). The shrine is always locked but in December 1997 a marble plaque was placed under the shrine with an ode to Hanumān, thus giving the impression that the red face peering out from behind the cloth is the god Hanumān. The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'Sṛṣṭigaṇeśa in the south is the indicator of creation and annihilation' (57:109). This short reference in the text does not offer any clarification with regard to his name nor with regard to his exact location. His name is mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse four hundred and ninety-seven).

A white garment covers all but the face of Sṛṣṭi Vināyaka. The features underneath are very vague and eroded. A large third eye is glued to the forehead but it does not appear that the god is wearing a crown. The trunk turns towards the left. The ears are disproportionately large. The vague contours suggest that there was an arm on the right side, hanging at the side of the belly, but other arms or hands have disappeared in the layers of vermilion, therefore making it difficult to guess whether there were four or two arms. Equally it is impossible to say whether or not he was originally depicted with a *yajñopavīta* or other ornaments. From what is visible of the lower part of the statue it would appear this Vināyaka is sitting cross-legged. The blurred features make it very difficult to establish a date for this statue and hence it is here classified as undatable.

VI. 4. Yakṣa Vināyaka (44) (page 90). Banaras has several Yakṣa Vināyakas³⁰³ but the one belonging to the fifty-six Vināyaka group is hidden in a house in the Kotwālpura area in house number K 37/29 on Rudra Prayāg (Sukul 1977:358; Vyās 1987:92).³⁰⁴ The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'Yakṣa Vināyaka is in the south-west and is the destroyer of all obstacles. He is the greatest of them all' (57:109). The role attributed to this Vināyaka is the general function of Gaṇeśa. His name is mentioned by the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse four hundred and ninety-seven).

The statue is about eighty centimetres in height and has features of both the first and the second period, thus indicating that it was probably carved at a period when the skills of earlier

³⁰³ The Yakṣa Vināyaka belonging to the fifty-six Vināyakas is not very well-known in today's Banaras as its shrine is not open to the public. The Vināyaka which has become famous under the name of Yakṣa Vināyaka is one of the Pañcamukha Vināyakas which is situated near Dhuṇḍhirāja (see *infra*).

³⁰⁴ Sukul writes that the Vināyaka was worshipped for some time but then there seem to have been a problem and worship ceased (Sukul 1977:358). The Kotwālpura area has always been a very volatile area in terms of destructions and reconstructions. It was nearby that the first Viśvanātha *mandir* was destroyed and later rebuilt. Because of this historical situation it is difficult to believe that the statue is the original one although it is possible that it survived because it was well hidden. Still, its present date suggests that this one might be a replacement of the thirteenth or fourteenth century for the one which was there before.

times still prevailed. The Vināyaka is bare-headed and the forehead and the trunk bone have the natural style of the early statues. The trunk turns towards the left and touches the sweetmeats held in the lower left hand. The ears are fan shaped and the veins are visible. He is seated in the *lalitāsana* position with his lower right hand resting on his knee. What he holds in the upper hands is not very clear but on the left side it seems almost as if the attribute was cut off to make the statue fit into the space. The surface of the *mūrti* is very smooth and there is no trace of a *yajñopavīta* or any other ornament. In comparison with the upper part of the body, especially the face, the legs are slender and oddly shaped.

This statue, in combining features of the first (the bare head and the naturally curled trunk) and the second period (the two back hands no longer with the flexibility of the first period and the legs without any plasticity at all), is a good example of the transitional style of the fourteenth century.

VI. 5. Gajakarṇa Vināyaka (44) (page 91). 'The Vināyaka with the Elephant Ears'. This Vināyaka is situated in the Kotwālpura area, in the Īśāneśvara temple number C.K. 37/43, behind the Bhanspātak cinema (Sukul 1977:358; Vyās 1987:93). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'Gajakarṇa in the west is the cause of welfare to all' (57:110). He is mentioned by the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse four hundred and ninety-seven).

The figure is small, about twenty-five centimetres high, and is bare-headed. With the slightly protruding temples and trunk bone, the head resembles that of an elephant. Besides the trunk there are two small tusks. The trunk hangs downwards over the belly and is slightly curved towards the right. It resembles Kāla Vināyaka in the sense that it also stands in the *tribhaṅga* position, the right hand leaning on a club and the left hand holding a flower in the form of a solar disk. Between the legs the folds of the *dhoti* can be seen. On the right upper arm there is a band: this could either be an ornament worn on the upper arm, or it could be the fold of a scarf as it is on Jyeṣṭha Vināyaka (see *infra*).

Stylistically this Vināyaka clearly belongs to the first period. Gajakarṇa Vināyaka is a classic example of early Vināyaka statues: standing, in the *tribhaṅga* position, only two arms and a very elephantine head. The image of Gajakarṇa is carved on a small miniature temple or *śivala* which is very similar to those found around Lakṣmī and Sūrya *kuṇḍa* (see Chapter Three). This emphasises the antiquity of the Vināyaka *mūrti* and adds to the probability that this Vināyaka was originally situated elsewhere in the neighbourhood.

VI. 6. Citraghaṇṭa Vināyaka (46) (page 92). 'The Bell Vināyaka'. The location of this Vināyaka is problematic. Both Vyās (1987:93) and Sukul (1977:359) give two possible sites for the present Citraghaṇṭa. Sukul does not believe that either of the two sites is correct.

The two places where Citraghaṇṭa Vināyaka can be found are: first, in the Rāni Kuā area, near the temple of Citraghaṇṭī Devī, number 23/34 and second in Cāndanī Cauk,³⁰⁵ house number C.K. 23/25. In the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* is written: 'The Gaṇapati named Citraghaṇṭa protects the city in the north-west' (57:110). The positions of both of the two possible Citraghaṇṭa Vināyaka are in the north-west of the city. Citraghaṇṭa is mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu*, the *Tīrthaprakāśa* and the *Merutantra* (verse four hundred and ninety-seven).

The first location is a roadside shrine. A plaque indicates the presence of Citraghaṇṭa Vināyaka but the statue is little more than a mound with two white eyes. Next to it stands a similar image, again shapeless and with two eyes. The door of this shrine is always locked. This and the fact that the statue is nothing more than a heap of red *sindūr* are the reasons why no picture is reproduced in the Appendix.

The second possible location is in a shrine on the road just before the actual Cauk. The statue is about forty centimetres in height and it is with some difficulty that it can be seen that this is a Vināyaka. The head is high and round and it is not clear whether he ever wore a crown. The trunk is projected and a gap further down the trunk suggests that it might have curled towards the right.³⁰⁶ On either side of the trunk are the eyes which are set deeply in the head. The vague shape of the rest of the statue suggests that the figure probably had four arms but due to the layers of vermillion all the attributes are blurred and unidentifiable, as is the stance. Apart from a few silver papers which decorate the *mūrti*, there are no traces of any ornaments. A real *yajñopavīta* seems to be tied around the neck of this Vināyaka, possibly suggesting that one is not carved on the statue.

The position of the trunk could suggest a late date for this statue so here it is assigned to the modern period. Some people believe that this Vināyaka is the actually Sthūlajaṅgha Vināyaka (see *supra*).

VI. 7. Sthūlajaṅgha Vināyaka (47) (page 93). The meaning of the name is obscure. The identity and location of this Vināyaka are problematic. No less than four Vināyakas are suggested as the 'real' Sthūlajaṅgha Vināyaka. On visiting the four different sites it is easy to conclude that none of these are the authentic image. The area in which this Vināyaka is supposed to have been located was, and is still, densely populated by Muslims (see Chapter One). It is interesting also that the nineteenth-century guide books to the different

³⁰⁵ This location is also accepted by the *Kāśīsthadevasmaṇṇavalī*, page 117.

³⁰⁶ A slightly similar gap representing tusk and trunk is found in the statue of Kalipriya Vināyaka (Appendix, page 80).

yātrās of the city do not agree on this Vināyaka either.³⁰⁷ The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'In the north Sthūlajāṅgha subdues the sins of those who control their minds' (57:111). His name is mentioned by the *Tristhalīsetu* and the *Tīrthaprakāśa* but it is omitted in the *Merutantra*.

Some people believe that the location of this Vināyaka is in the Maṅgala Gaurī temple, a position which is definitely wrong because there only is one figure of a Vināyaka in that temple and that is believed to be Maṅgala Vināyaka (see *supra*). Another theory is that Sthūlajāṅgha Vināyaka is located near Cauk and is the same figure as the aforementioned Citraghaṇṭa Vināyaka. Others have suggested that his *mūrti* is found in the Paśupatiśvara temple but there are two Vināyaka *mūrtis* there and no one has suggested which of the two is Sthūlajāṅgha. However, in a personal communication Vyās suggested that the larger of the two is Sthūlajāṅgha. A fourth suggestion made by Sukul is that Sthūlajāṅgha is to be found in a wall of the Āṣāḍhīśvara temple in Rāja Darwāza (1977:359). The Vināyaka there is very modern.

Because Maṅgala Vināyaka will be described next and Citraghaṇṭa Vināyaka has just been described, the following iconographical description will be limited to the statues in the Paśupatiśvara (the *sindūra*-smeared one) and the Rāja Darwāza temple. If the statue of Sthūlajāṅgha Vināyaka is to be found in the Paśupatiśvara temple then there is a choice between two *mūrtis*. The larger of the two, about one metre high, shows a bare-headed Vināyaka carved with a big halo around his head. The head is old with the trunk bone slightly protruding and the trunk curled towards the left. On the tip of the tusk he carries a *modaka*. This movement of the trunk is elsewhere found in Kūṭadanta Vināyaka and Kalipriya Vināyaka. The base of the trunk is also very broad. He is seated in the *lalitāsana* and his legs are very thin compared with the rest of the body: it almost looks as if the weight of the upper body has squeezed his legs. On the right side there is a big tusk visible. The ears are large and clearly outlined. He has four arms, wearing ornaments on all of them. The upper right hand seems to be formed into a fist. The upper left hand is slightly damaged but could be holding a noose or a lotus flower. Both the lower hands rest on the knees. No *yajñopavīta* can be seen over the vast belly.

The strangely shaped limbs and the somewhat artificial back arms date this statue no earlier than the eighteenth century. The size of the statue confirms this period.

³⁰⁷ *Vārāṇasī Ādarśa* (page 80) locates Sthūlajāṅgha Vināyaka on Bāla *ghāt*, in the Maṅgala Gaurī temple, an argument which is agreed upon by the author of *Pañcakrośī Yātrā* (page 54). The *Kāśīyātrā* (page 82) argues that this Vināyaka is on Pañcagaṅgā, closeby Maṅgala Gaurī. His name is also Mitra Vināyaka. Maṅgala Vināyaka is placed, not in the Maṅgala Gaurī temple but in the Ātmavīreśvara temple, according to the same source. *Kāśīsthadevasmāṇavalī* and *Kāśīprakāśa* do not mention any difficulties concerning the location of Sthūlajāṅgha Vināyaka.

³⁰⁸ The English translation of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* by Tagare omits this Vināyaka and considers Mitra Vināyaka as the eighth Vināyaka on the sixth circle.

To the left of this Vināyaka there is another smaller one, some forty centimetres high, which seems to be older. The head is high and the shape suggests a crown. The eyes are modern and placed at the beginning of the trunk, one eye functioning as the third eye. His ears are small and rectangular. The trunk turns towards the right and touches the sweetmeats held by the right hand on the knee. In his upper right hand he holds an axe. The upper left hand holds an unidentifiable attribute and the lower hand rests on the knee, holding a rosary. The figure is depicted in the *lalitāsana*.

The headgear and the position of the trunk, as well as the lack of plasticity, date this statue to the sixteenth or seventeenth century and therefore it is here assigned to the third period.

The statue found in Rāja Darwāza is very modern and well carved. It is made from a black shiny stone and depicts the Vināyaka sitting between two consorts waving a fly whisk. His crown is elaborate with a base of precious stones and flower petals above. On his forehead a *candra bindu* can be observed above which a jewel holds a pearl hair band. The trunk is turned towards the right and holds a *modaka*. The trunk lies in the right hand which rests on the knee. In the upper right hand he carries a lotus flower. The lower left hand rests on the knee and holds a palm leaf manuscript. The upper arm carries the axe. The Vināyaka sits in the *lalitāsana* with the folds of his *dhoti* arranged between his legs. Around his neck he wears several pearl necklaces and around his feet and wrists he also has ornaments. His two consorts are standing and both wear a *dhoti* tied between their legs. The Śakti on his right side also holds a cup in her free hand while the other one holds a wine jar. The Vināyaka is seated on a lotus seat and at his right foot is a small mouse.

VI. 8. Maṅgala Vināyaka (48) (page 94). 'The Auspicious Vināyaka'. The statue of Maṅgala Vināyaka is found in the Maṅgala Gaurī temple on Bāl *ghāṭ* (Sukul 1977:355; Vyās 1987:92). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* reads: 'In the north-eastern corner is Maṅgala Vināyaka who maintains and protects the city' (57:112).³⁰⁸ Maṅgala Vināyaka is mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu* and the *Tīrthaparakāśa* but is omitted in the *Merutantra*.

The figure itself stands behind a Devī statue and cannot be seen when entering the temple. Because of the position of the statue it was impossible to take a photograph so only a sketch is provided in the Appendix. His position hidden behind a Devī shrine does not seem to be of any significance. The Maṅgala Gaurī temple is the oldest temple on Bāl *ghāṭ* and until the construction of the Bāl *ghāṭ* temple in the beginning of the twentieth century the whole *ghāṭ* was called Maṅgala Gaurī *ghāṭ*. The text of the *Gūṛvaṇapadamañjarī* (sixteenth century) and Prinsep's accounts demonstrate that the Maṅgala Gaurī *ghāṭ* was well known in the late medieval period (Harishankar 1996:72). It is difficult to say whether the statue which is

considered to be Maṅgala Vināyaka was always considered so and it is unclear whether Maṅgala Vināyaka is in the Maṅgala Gaurī temple or in the Ātmavīreśvara temple (Sukul 1977:355-356). However, the Vināyaka in the Ātmavīreśvara temple is currently known under the name of Mitra Vināyaka.

The statue is about forty centimetres in height and depicted in the *lalitāsana* position. On his head he wears a topknot. The two white eyes are modern additions. The ears are no longer visible and have possibly merged with the background stone. His trunk hangs down over his potbelly and is slightly curled towards the left. Originally he had four hands but the left upper arm has disappeared. The right upper one holds an axe. Both the lower hands seem to rest on the knees. The figure lacks any form of flexibility or plasticity. No *yajñopavīta* or ornaments can be discerned.

Because of the complete lack of flexibility it is likely that this statue is of the sixteenth or seventeenth century, and hence it is assigned to the third period.

VI. Mitra Vināyaka (page 95). 'The Friend Vināyaka'. The position of Mitra Vināyaka is problematic. In the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* he is mentioned after the eighth Vināyaka on the sixth circle, bringing the total of Vināyakas to fifty-seven. In some modern works describing the fifty-six Vināyakas and the *yātrā* of them he is sometimes mentioned instead of Sthūlajāṅgha Vināyaka (as in Vyās 1987:93). Because the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* mentions him after Maṇikarṇa Vināyaka he is included here.³⁰⁹ His present location is in the Ātmavīreśvara temple near Maṇikarṇikā Devī on Scindia *ghāṭ*, C.K. 7/158 (Sukul 1977:356; Vyās 1987:93). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* reads: 'That auspicious Vināyaka named Mitra Vināyaka protects the city of Īśa in the north-east. He is to be worshipped in the north of the Yama *tīrtha*' (57:112). The position of Mitra Vināyaka among the fifty-six Vināyakas is unique: not only does he bring the number of Vināyakas on the sixth circle to nine instead of eight but by being added to the group of the fifty-six Vināyakas the total number goes up to fifty-seven Vināyakas, thus breaking the pattern of seven times eight. The situation concerning Mitra Vināyaka seems always to have been confusing, with some guide books including his name while he is omitted by others. His present location on Scindia *ghāṭ* corresponds with the text of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* for the Yama *tīrtha* is south of Scindia *ghāṭ*, near Maṇikarṇikā. Mitra Vināyaka is not mentioned in the *Tristhalīsetu* nor in the *Tīrthaprakāśa*, a fact which could indicate that in the sixteenth and

³⁰⁹ Concerning Mitra Vināyaka, an interesting point is made in the *Kāśīyātrāprakāśa* (page 66) which says 'In the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* this Vināyaka is mentioned but some people call him Maṅgala Vināyaka' (translated from the Hindi).

³¹⁰ In the *Tantrasāra* five forms of Gaṇeśa are mentioned, one of them being Haridrā Gaṇeśa who together with Ucchiṣṭa Gaṇeśa is considered as two of the six Gaṇapati cults which developed from the tenth century onwards. The name Āmoda is one of the names listed for Haridrā. Others are Pramoda, Sumukha, Durmukha and Gaṇanāyaka (Pal 1981:128).

seventeenth centuries, the confusion between Mitra and Maṅgala had already occurred. The *Merutantra*, however, does mention this Vināyaka (verse four hundred and ninety-seven).

The statue is about one metre in height and the surface is very rough as if the creators wanted to create the effect that he was made out of rubble. He is bare-headed with a rather bulging forehead and a trunk which seems to have been added afterwards. His ears are well proportioned compared with the rest of the statue. He is seated in the *lalitāsana* position. His trunk turns towards the right and touches the *modakas* in the right hand. In his upper right hand he holds a *pāśa*. The upper left hand has a lotus flower and the lower left hand rests on the knee and holds an *akṣamālā*. The two back arms seem to be detached from the body. He has two eyes and wears ankle rings. Because of the very uneven surface of the body no *yajñopavīta* is visible. The whole Vināyaka statue sits on a structure on which a small rat is depicted.

Despite the rough surface which would give this statue an older appearance, this statue cannot be dated before the eighteenth century and is possibly even from the nineteenth century. The indicators for this are the two back arms which are detached from the body, and also the size of the statue.

Coming now to the seventh and innermost circle of Vināyakas, the first five Vināyakas are known as the Moda Vināyakas or 'the Vināyakas of Delight'. Their individual names are not mentioned by the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, thus giving the impression that they were worshipped as one entity and that their individual names were known only to devotees. The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'The five Vighneśas are Moda and the others' (57:113).

VII. 1. Moda Vināyaka (49) (page 96). 'The Vināyaka of Delight'. His statue is situated in a temple in the Nepālī *khaprā*, house number C.K. 31/12 (Sukul 1977:357; Vyās 1987:93). The *paṇḍit* there did not allow the taking of any photographs of this thirty centimetre high figure which is set in a wall.

Moda Vināyaka has a large bare forehead in which is a crescent moon shaped carving. The ears have disappeared: they were probably placed at the back of the head and have merged with the background. Two thin cuts represent the eyes. The trunk turns towards the left at an angle of ninety degrees. It is possible that the trunk touched a *modaka* bowl as it hangs in the air. The Vināyaka may have had four arms but only two are now visible and they are too damaged to show any attributes. The position of his legs make it clear that he is depicted in the *lalitāsana*. The *mūrti* does not show any traces of ornaments or of a *yajñopavīta*.

Because the group of five Vināyakas is known as the Moda Vināyakas it can be assumed that Moda Vināyaka was the first and foremost of these five Vināyakas.

VII. 2. Pramoda Vināyaka (50) (page 97). 'The Vināyaka of Utter Delight'. His location is very close to that of Moda Vināyaka in the same Nepali *khaprā*, number C.K. 31/16. His statue is at the rear of a milk and sweets shop (Sukul 1977:357; Vyās 1987:93).

The statue is carved on an oval stone slab and has unusual features and is fifty centimetres high. The most remarkable feature is that there is no trunk. Where there used to be a trunk, nothing is left but a protruding nose bone. If there were ears, they have merged with the background stone. Of the limbs only the legs are still visible, and they are depicted in the *lalitāsana* position. It appears as if there were four arms, although this cannot be said with great certainty, and the possible attributes cannot be described at all. On the forehead three sectarian marks are painted. The white eyes are recent additions. The damaged statue does not show any trace of a *yajñopavīta* or ornaments.

The absence of the trunk and attributes make it difficult to date. It could be that there never was a trunk and that this statue originally depicted a *gaṇa* or another sort of demon. The owners of the shop told me that when it was built, the Vināyaka statue was not touched. His unusual location at the back of the shop certainly indicates this to be true. If this is true, then the Vināyaka originally stood very close to the Viśvanāth temple which was destroyed by Aurangzeb in the seventeenth century. The chaos of that period and the subsequent activity of the construction of the mosque on the Viśvanāth temple site would make it almost impossible for any statue to have been situated there at that time. It is possible, therefore, to argue that the *mūrti* presently known as Pramoda Vināyaka came to its present location after the Mughal period or was hidden somewhere nearby during the Mughal years. The odd shape and the absence of a trunk could be evidence that the Vināyaka was originally another figure which was consequently accepted as a Vināyaka in the post-Mughal period.

VII. 3. Durmukha Vināyaka (51) (page 98). 'The Ugly-Faced Vināyaka'. This Vināyaka is located in house number C.K.35/7 (Sukul 1977:358; Vyās 1987:93).

The statue is one metre high. On his head this Vināyaka wears a conical crown which is typical for south Indian images of the god. The Gaṇeśa of Tiruttani dated ca. 895 CE and the Tirunaraiyur Gaṇeśa of the Coḷa dynasty (tenth century) are good examples of this headgear (Yadav 1997:plate 70; Martin-Dubost 1997:126, plate 8). The ears are very small and hardly visible. The trunk, which is very broad at the base, turns towards the right and touches the sweetmeat bowl, placed on the right knee. The fingers of the right upper hand clasp a round object, which could be a pomegranate or a *modaka*. The attribute in the upper left hand is very unclear and the lower left hand is placed on the knee and holds a rosary. Across his belly a *nāgayajñopavīta* is visible. His position is the *lalitāsana* but with the left knee raised, and his

legs are unrealistic and thin in comparison with the rest of the torso. Around the ankles and the wrists no ornaments are discernable.

The peculiar seated position, the stiffness of the limbs and the fact that the statue is rather large indicates a more recent date, perhaps the eighteenth century. The crown is uncommon for the north of India and is typical of Coḷa statues of the ninth or tenth century. It can therefore be suggested that the statue was sculptured by a south Indian artist who came to Banaras after the decline of the Mughal period. The somewhat odd form could hypothetically be explained by the fact that the artist did not have any good example from the south to hand.

VII. 4. Sumukha Vināyaka (52) (page 99). 'The Beautiful-faced Vināyaka'. This Vināyaka is located in house number C.K. 35/7 almost opposite Durmukha Vināyaka (Sukul 1977:358; Vyās 1987:93).

The statue is about one metre high and has a friendly appearance. The expanded forehead probably indicates a crown. The temples and the trunk bulge somewhat. The trunk turns towards the left and touches sweetmeats. Alongside the trunk two small tusks are visible. The ears are large and rectangular. It looks as if he has only two arms, because at the right side there is no indication of an upper arm. The right hand rests on the knee or holds a round object, a *modaka* or a pomegranate. He is represented in the *lalitāsana*. The *yajñopavīta* is not visible and because of the rough surface there are no indications of any jewellery either.

The presence of only two arms could suggest an early date but the lack of flexibility and the turns of the trunk in angles of ninety degrees place this statue in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, hence it is assigned to the second period.

VII. 5. Gaṇanātha Vināyaka (53) (page 100). 'The Leader of the Gaṇas'. The shrine of this Vināyaka is in Dhunḍhirāja *gali*, C.K. 37/1 (Sukul 1977:358; Vyās 1987:93).

This figure is about thirty centimetres high and is always covered with a garment, thus making it impossible to describe in full. On his forehead he has a third eye and through the opening of the cloth it can be seen that his trunk turns sharply towards the left. Perhaps the trunk touches the *modaka pātra* held in the left hand. The *paṇḍit* provided the information that the Vināyaka is represented in the *lalitāsana* position. As I was not permitted to view under the cloth, there is no information about the number of arms and the possible attributes held in them.

From what can be seen, this small sculpture is rather late and that the lower limit for this statue is no earlier than the seventeenth century.

Having analysed the five Moda Vināyakas according to their iconographic characteristics, it is necessary to analyse their position in the history of Banaras. Earlier, in Chapter Three, it was suggested that they may have originated out of the Pañca-Vināyaka concept which was depicted on panels and which was mentioned by Lakṣmīdhara in the twelfth century. Their reference in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* as the five 'Moda Vināyakas' shows that they were considered as an entity. The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, however, does not give any details about their geographical position in the city or their position relative to other Vināyakas. The fact that they are mentioned on the inner circle which is the closest to Viśvanātha could indicate that their position in terms of direction was either not important or not very clear. Maybe at the time of the composition of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* they were still depicted as one group instead of as separate Vināyakas located in different places.

If the fifty-six Vināyakas are considered as situated in seven circles then the present location of the five Moda Vināyakas breaks this circular pattern because four of them, Moda, Pramoda, Sumukha and Durmukha, are situated in a line (see Fig. 4: MV, PV, SV and DV). Their alignment is north-east of Viśvanātha. The political disturbances of the medieval period and the repeated demolition of the Viśvanātha temple are the main reasons as to why there is no similarity of style or period between the Moda Vināyakas. All of them can and should be considered as being placed at their present locations after the collapse of the Mughal empire and probably none of them belonged to the original group of Vināyakas.

The *Tristhalīsetu* omits the name of Gaṇanātha Vināyaka and replaces it with the name Āmoda Vināyaka, thus stating 'Moda, Pramoda, Āmoda, Sumukha and Durmukha' as the five Moda Vināyakas. The name Āmoda also occurs in lists of the Tantric forms of Gaṇeśa (Pal 1981:128, 142-143).³¹⁰ The *Tīrthaprakāśa* does list the five Moda Vināyakas as they are mentioned in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* and so does the *Merutantra*, which lists them in the same order (verse four hundred and ninety nine).

VII. 6. Jñāna Vināyaka (54) (page 101). 'The Vināyaka of Wisdom'. The huge statue is situated at the southern edge of the *maṇḍapa* under which is the Jñāna Vāpī well (Sukul 1977:359; Vyās 1987:93).

The statue is one metre and twenty centimetres high and has three eyes painted on its forehead. Two eyes have eye-lashes painted on them. The forehead bulges slightly and on the whole this is a very good representation of an elephant head. There is a little tusk on the right side though none on the left. The trunk turns towards the left and touches the sweet bowl in the left hand on the knee. The upper left hand holds a flower in the form of a sun. The upper right hand carries the axe and the lower right rests on the knee, clasping a rosary. He wears

ankle rings. He sit in the *lalitāsana* and wears a *yajñopavīta* across his belly. He also has large ears. On the base of the structure is an image of two rats facing each other.

The sharpness of the features and the size of the statue leave no doubt that it is very recent, probably established in the twentieth century.

Again the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* does not provide any geographical evidence about this Vināyaka, but the fact that his name is Jñāna Vināyaka and situated near the Jñāna Vāpī well should indicate that there was no need for an elaborate description of his name since this Vināyaka was probably always identified with the well. The glory of the Jñāna Vāpī well is described in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*.

VII. 7. Dvāra Vināyaka (55) (page 102). 'The Vināyaka of the Gate'. For this Vināyaka two possible locations are given by Sukul (1977:359). According to him the correct site is the *mūrti* in the Pañca Pāṇḍava temple near Viśvanātha. Unfortunately the Vināyaka *mūrti* in this temple is a very damaged statue of which only the body is intact. The other possible site, also quoted by Vyās (1987:93), is the Dvāra Vināyaka shrine near the Java Vināyaka temple on the way to Maṇikarnikā *ghāṭ*.³¹¹ The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* text states: 'The seventh one is Dvāra Vināyaka in front of the great door' (57:114). Some scholars such as Sukul and Rana P. B. Singh have argued that the text of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* is quite clear about the location of this Vināyaka, namely before the great door, thus indicating that it was posted before the temple door of the Viśvanātha temple. However, nowhere in the text is there an explicit reference to the fact that the 'great door' was indeed the 'temple door'. The 'great door' could equally have referred to a city gate and in particular to the gate which guarded the *antaragrha* area. One of the reasons why some scholars, such as Vyās, believe that Dvāra Vināyaka is located near the Java Vināyaka temple is because it is there that the pilgrims who do the Pañcakrośī Yātrā offer barley and proceed to what is considered the most sacred part of the city.

The first mentioned statue is a small figure of about thirty centimetres and is found in the Pañca Pāṇḍava temple, C.K. 28/10, on the way from Cauk to the Viśvanātha temple (Sukul 1977:359). The *lambodara* suggests that this was originally a statue of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa. The

³¹¹ It is argued by Sukul that Dvāra Vināyaka's original site should be at the door of the Viśvanātha temple. However, over the centuries the site of the Viśvanātha temple itself has changed several times, therefore being no proof of the present site of Dvāra Vināyaka.

³¹² Although this Dhuṇḍhirāja is now known as the only real one, Sukul pointed out that fifty years before the compilation of his book (1977) the Pañcamukha Vināyaka statue which stands in the temple of Rāṇī Bhavānī above the present shrine of Dhuṇḍhi was known as Ādi Dhuṇḍhi. The *paṇḍit* of the Pañcamukha Vināyaka established by Rāṇī Bhavānī knew about the story of the Peśvā prince or merchant establishing a new Dhuṇḍhi *mūrti*, but he was unable to give any more information concerning the identity of the Peśvā. He did not even know whether it was a nobleman or a trader on pilgrimage. When I asked about this in the Marāṭhī community in Banaras they also failed to give a suitable answer.

figure is headless and it is possible to see that he was represented in a seated position and with four arms. Unfortunately not enough remains to be able to identify the attributes.

The second possibility is another small statue of approximately forty centimetres height situated in a shrine near the Java Vināyaka temple. The bulge on top of his head suggests that originally he had a topknot. The trunk bone is protrudes slightly and the trunk itself turns towards the left and touches the *modaka pātra* held in the left hand. The upper left hand holds an unidentifiable attribute. The upper right hand carries the axe and the lower hand rests on the knee and possibly holds an *akṣamālā*. He is *ekadanta* and has two small eyes. He is seated in the *lalitāsana*. As the image is very small and the surface very rough it is impossible to say whether there was a *yajñopavīta* depicted or not and whether this Vināyaka wears ankle rings and bracelets.

The rough surface of the statue makes dating problematic but, considering the relative plasticity of the body and limbs, the thirteenth or fourteenth century is a possible date for the image and hence it is assigned to the second period.

VII. 8. Avimukta Vināyaka (56) (page 103). Today there is an Avimukta Vināyaka to the left of the entrance in the Viśvanātha temple (Sukul 1977:355) but according to Vyās this is a fairly modern statue and the authentic Avimukta Vināyaka is to be found amongst the debris at the back of the Jñāna Vāpī mosque (Vyās 1987:93). Despite the accessibility of the modern Avimukta Vināyaka in the Viśvanāth temple, the one at the back of the Jñāna Vāpī mosque is still honoured whenever devotees have the chance to go through the security barriers. Unfortunately a large fence prevents the taking of photographs. The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'Avimukta Vināyaka, the eighth one, removes all the distress of those with humble minds in my holy spot Avimukta' (57:114). There is no correspondence between the name of this Vināyaka and his function as a remover of distress. The fact that this Vināyaka is called Avimukta indicates that the nomenclature of this Vināyaka predates the decline of Avimukta in the thirteenth century. Clearly neither of the two contenders for Avimukta Vināyaka can claim the status of being the original statue.

The Vināyaka is carved on a panel and is completely eroded. The head and the trunk are still visible and he is bare-headed, has large ears with his trunk turned towards the right. At the base the trunk is very broad. Because of the damaged state of the statue no more information concerning the attributes, a *yajñopavīta* or ornaments, could be obtained.

The position and shape of the trunk suggest that this statue dates from the sixteenth or seventeenth century. This date would then correspond with the construction of the new Viśvanātha temple around 1588 CE and its demolition less than a century later.

The description and dating of each of the fifty-six Vināyakas together with Mitra Vināyaka is now complete. Although there are other Vināyakas in Banaras, there is only one further Vināyaka who will be treated here because of his crucial connection to the Vināyaka *maṇḍala*. This is Dhuṇḍhirāja, the most important Vināyaka in the sacred area. When Gaṇeśa was sent to Kāśī he assumed the form of Dhuṇḍhirāja and divided himself into fifty-six Vināyaka forms, thus Dhuṇḍhi is the *fons et origio* of all the other Vināyakas. Controversy surrounds the present statue of Dhuṇḍhirāja which will be discussed in Chapter Five.

It is generally accepted that the statue standing at the doorway of the alley leading to the Viśvanātha temple is Dhuṇḍhi. The sculpture is about one metre in height. His head is abnormally large and the ears, hardly visible under the ever-present flower garlands, are set into the background panel. On his forehead he has a crescent silver moon and a third eye. His trunk curls towards the left side and the end curls upwards. He has four hands, all of which are silver plated. The two lower hands rest on his knees and he wears bracelets around his wrists. The back arms do not seem to be an integral part of the rest of the body, thus indicating its recent date. It is also not very clear what the attributes are. The attribute in the right hand resembles a flower. Despite the multitude of flower garlands there is no doubt that Dhuṇḍhi is not represented with a *yajñopavīta*. Dhuṇḍhi is seated in the *lalitāsana* position and his feet are also covered with silver.

It is known that this statue of Dhuṇḍhirāja was established by a Peśvā prince or merchant in the eighteenth century³¹² and the iconographic style of this figure corresponds with the style of that period.

The Classification of the Vināyakas according to their Periods.

First Period	Second Period	Third Period	Fourth Period
Seventh-Twelfth Centuries	Thirteenth-Sixteenth Centuries	Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries	Eighteenth-Twentieth Centuries
Kharva Kūṣmāṇḍa Vikāṭadvija Ekadanta Varada Modakapriya Abhaya Cintāmaṇi Jyeṣṭha Kāla Gajakarṇa	Arka Pāśapāṇi Lambodara Muṇḍa Yakṣa Sumukha Dvāra	Bhīmacaṇḍa Uddaṇḍa Praṇava Vakratuṇḍa Gaja Durmukha Siṃhatuṇḍa Kṣipraprasādana Dantahasta Sthūladanta Kalipriya Caturdanta Dvimukha Maṅgala Āvimukta	Durga Siddhi Dehalī Kūṭadanta Śālakaṭankāṭa Trimukha Pañcāsya Vighnarāja Kūṇitākṣi Piciṇḍila Uddaṇḍamuṇḍa Nāgeśa Maṇikarṇa Āśā Sthūlajaṅgha Gaṇanātha Jñāna

Citraghanṭa, Sṛṣṭi, Rājaputra, Heramba, Moda and Pramoda are undatable and the present Dhunḍhirāja *mūrti* can be dated to the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Fifty-Six Vināyakas as a Maṇḍala

Hitherto, the fifty-six Vināyakas have occasionally been referred to as a grouping. The question now is whether or not this grouping constitutes the symbolic unity implied by the term *maṇḍala*. This chapter first examines briefly the notion of the *maṇḍala*, then turns to the conceptualisation of Banaras as a cosmologised *maṇḍala*, considering the various deities that populate the city. Finally the question of whether or not the fifty-six Vināyakas may be considered a *maṇḍala* is examined.

Eliade (1961, 1969) and Tucci (1961) are two scholars who have written extensively about the *maṇḍala* and the theories behind it in its various manifestations. Here it will be sufficient to summarise their general findings. The earliest reference to the word *maṇḍala* is found in the Vedas where it means 'circle' (Eliade 1969:219). The *Rgveda* (4:28:2) uses the word to describe a 'solar disc' and later Samhitās and Brāhmaṇas use the term when dealing with the construction of temples or altars (R. Rao 1988:18).³¹³ The notion of a *maṇḍala* as 'circle' was soon extended and today the *maṇḍala* is an important symbol in religion, art, yoga and psychology. Both Hindus and Buddhists have used the symbolism of the *maṇḍala* as a means of representing cosmic order in temples and art or to express different levels of consciousness in yoga.³¹⁴ The multiple usage of the term *maṇḍala* requires that, when studying the *maṇḍala*, a distinction is made between the *maṇḍala* as a circular diagram and the symbolic meaning attributed to it. The *maṇḍala* evolved from the notion of a circle to become a complex design, comprising one or more concentric circles or square divisions within a circular border.³¹⁵ However simple or complicated the design, the *maṇḍala* acquired a greater significance as it became a symbol of the cosmos and its applications became regarded as

³¹³ The term *maṇḍaleṣṭakā* is applied when bricks are put in a circular shape. In the fire altars for the Soma sacrifice, the *maṇḍala* concept was adapted to forms other than the circle. The area of the altar consisted of seven and a half squares and the area of the circle had to correspond to the area of that square (R. Rao 1988:18). Eliade (1991:54) explains that the *maṇḍala* functioned as a representation of the centre in architecture and iconography.

³¹⁴ In his work on *maṇḍalas*, Tucci (1961) mainly focuses on the use of the symbol of the *maṇḍala* in yoga and esotericism.

³¹⁵ Eliade (1969:219) describes a *maṇḍala* as 'a complex design comprising a circular border and one or more concentric circles enclosing a square division in four triangles. In the centre of each triangle and in the centre of the *maṇḍala* itself are other circles containing images of the divinities and their emblems'.

³¹⁶ 'In mythical geography, however, sacred space is the essential real space' (Eliade 1961:40). A good definition of sacred space is suggested by Brereton (1986:526): 'The sacred space includes spaces that can be entered physically, as the outer geography of a holy land, imaginatively, as the inner body in Tāntric *yoga*, or visually, as the space of *maṇḍala*'.

representations of the cosmos, whether of the macrocosm or of the inner microcosmic world or of both together.

The *maṇḍala* is an image of the world (Eliade 1961:51-54; 1969:220). The world of the *maṇḍala*, however, is not everyday profane reality, rather it is sacred space.³¹⁶ The sacred character of this space is not initially defined by the outer boundary of a *maṇḍala* but by a hierophany, or ritual, which then utilises the concept of the *maṇḍala* to delineate and represent the sacred border. The hierophanic character of a sacred space results in a space which is neither profane, homogenous or geometric, because hierophany is rarely so tidily structured (Eliade 1961:39). It is the difficulty of visualising this sacred space which leads to the symbolisation of this space by the means of the *maṇḍala*. The direct implication of the symbolisation of sacred space is the existence of a non-sacred space. When visualised on the *maṇḍala* this suggests that the area outside the *maṇḍala* is profane or even dangerous. The *maṇḍala* not only delineates the consecrated space, it also protects it from an invasion of the evil which could threaten the sacral purity of the space within the *maṇḍala*.

The second crucial characteristic of the *maṇḍala* symbol is the notion of 'the centre'. It is the centre that creates and defines the world included within the circle.³¹⁷ In many cultures representations of the cosmos often rotate around an axis or a centre which symbolises the most sacred point within that cosmology. The use of a centre has taken many forms: on a small scale both *stūpas* and temples, or the *garbha gr̥ha* within them, are considered as the 'centre of the world', whereas in larger contexts every holy place can be regarded as 'the centre'. The multiplication of holy places and temples purporting to be the *axis mundi* results in a loss in the religious efficacy of these centres, which creates the need for a symbol such as the *maṇḍala* to maintain and clarify the true meaning of the sacred centre. This permits a definition of the *maṇḍala* as a geometric projection of a world which is reduced to an essential pattern consisting of two important elements: the first being the outer boundary which not only encloses the sacred but also wards off evil, thus differentiating the sacred from the profane, and the second being the centre or *axis mundi*.

Eliade (1969: 222) connects the intricate pattern of the *maṇḍala*, linked to its complex symbolic meaning, to the notion of the labyrinth, seeing a commonality in two main characteristics: the entry into the *maṇḍala* and thus into the sacred space, and the protection provided against harmful forces from the outside so that one may reach the sacred centre of the

³¹⁷ Eck (1986:42) quotes Eliade (1959:22): 'If the world is to be lived in, it must be founded – and no world can come to birth in the chaos of the homogeneity and relativity of profane space. The discovery or projection of a fixed point – the centre – is equivalent to the creation of the world'.

³¹⁸ The *maṇḍala* in the landscape of Nepal has been widely discussed in the work of Mary Slusser (1982). Robert Levy's in-depth study of Bhaktapur's sacred territory (1992) also provides an account of the application of the symbolism of the *maṇḍala* in Hindu cities in Nepal.

cosmos visualised. These two characteristics of the *maṇḍala* take on different forms according to the application of the symbol of the *maṇḍala*. In art and architecture, the entry ritual is reflected in the construction of different levels within a temple or *stūpa*: the highest elevation is thus a representation of the *sanctum sanctorum*. On pilgrimages, the entry process is initiated as circumambulation around the sacred space. At the end of the *pradakṣiṇā* the pilgrim reaches the holy *sanctum* which is open towards heaven or liberation. The whole ritual of entering the sacred space of the *maṇḍala* is closely connected with the march towards the centre of the *maṇḍala*. In order to gain a better understanding of the movement towards the centre of the sacred space it is necessary to bear in mind that the symbolism of the *maṇḍala* manifests itself on the horizontal as well as on the vertical level. On the horizontal plane one enters the *maṇḍala* or sacred space and moves towards the centre. In doing so one acquires merit and blessings, thus raising one's spiritual condition prior to meeting with the central theophany which is indicative of the vertical plane. This notion of both a vertical and a horizontal plane can be seen in most of the main pilgrimages. In the Pañcakrośī Yātrā, for instance, the pilgrim circumambulates one hundred and eight shrines and thereby moves through the horizontal layer of the Kāśī *maṇḍala*, and, at the same time, through the completion of the pilgrimage, attains a higher spiritual state and comes closer to salvation.

Tantrism has greatly influenced the complexity of the *maṇḍala* and its applications, especially in Buddhism. It is not necessary here to deal with *maṇḍala* in Tantrism since this has been dealt with at length elsewhere. What is of concern here is how the Hindus applied the symbolism of the concept in their art and architecture and to their sacred cities. In some structures a strong circular element is clearly present: for instance, some Yoginī temples are built according to a circular ground plan. However, the greater part of Hindu art and architecture lacks this circular pattern, thus leading to some debate as to whether or not the *maṇḍala* symbolism was followed. This, however, is to confuse diagrammatic form with symbolic content. A complete absence of circular design is noticed in sacred landscapes yet they are described in Purāṇas and Māhātmyas as *maṇḍalas*. Most of the sacred cities of Hinduism are perceived as *maṇḍalas* in the Purāṇas and the Māhātmyas, thus confirming the *maṇḍala* as schematic and symbolic. Whole regions are considered to be *maṇḍalas*: a good example is the 'Nepal *maṇḍala*' which actually comprises only the Kathmandu valley.³¹⁸

No-one has done more than Eck to clarify the way in which Kāśī is conceived as a *maṇḍala*:

'The city with its divine inhabitants may be likened to the symbolic structure of the *maṇḍala*. In a religious or ritual sense, a *maṇḍala* is a sacred circle that represents the entire universe, its powers, its interrelations, and its grounding centre. A *maṇḍala* may be painted on canvas, like the vibrant, teeming *maṇḍalas* of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. It may be drawn in the dust of the earth, as are

the ritual circles of the Tantrist tradition. A *maṇḍala* may be constructed in architecture, as in the symbolic worlds of the Buddhist *stūpa* or the Hindu temple. And a *maṇḍala* may be envisioned in the divine plan of a city, as is Kāśī. All such *maṇḍalas* share a common symbolic structure. They show the plan of the entire universe, with its galaxies and its gods. The borders of the universe are guarded by fearsome and protective deities. The orientation of the world is emphasised by the presence of the four or the eight directions, who stake out its farthest limits. And at the centre of the *maṇḍala* is a particular god or a particular Buddha who, like the still centring-point of the architect's compass, grounds the ever-turning, ever-changing multiple worlds of the periphery. The city of Kāśī, with all its divine inhabitants, is such a *maṇḍala*. The radius of its sacred circle is a distance of five *kroshas*, about ten miles, and around its borders are a multitude of guardian deities. Within this outermost circle are increasingly smaller concentric circles, having Śiva as their common centre' (1993:146-147).³¹⁹

Eck (1993; 1986) shows how the city of Kāśī and its *maṇḍala* contain all the sacred places of India and all the gods of Hinduism. She shows how the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* connects every world in the universe with Kāśī by showing how their ruling Lords obtained their status through penance or asceticism in Kāśī. She has skillfully demonstrated how the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* cosmologised Kāśī mythologically, and has also shown how Kāśī should be properly regarded as a *maṇḍala*, marked out by increasingly smaller *yātrās*.

If Kāśī is a *maṇḍala* as Eck argues, then the grouping of the fifty-six Vināyakas must be considered in a similar light since they are grouped in seven concentric circles and in eight directions. Before considering whether the Vināyakas formed a subordinate *maṇḍala* within the Kāśī *maṇḍala*, it is necessary to look at the situation of some of the other deities within Śiva's entourage, the sixty-four Yoginīs, the twelve Ādityas and the eight Bhairavas. These deities, like the Vināyakas, appear as groups and they too are not regarded as supreme gods. An investigation of these deities therefore offers a useful context for a better understanding of the grouping of the Vināyakas.

³¹⁹ When speaking of increasingly smaller concentric circles Eck refers to the different *yātrās* present in the sacred territory. A study of the five principal *maṇḍalas* has been given by Rana P. B. Singh (1993). The *maṇḍala* of the 'five *kroshas*' is a reference to the Pañcakrośī Yātrā which circumambulates the city and which forms the outer circle of the Vināyaka cover. Singh argues that there was originally another larger pilgrimage, the Caurāsīkrośī Yātrā, around the city which seems to have fallen into disuse before the twelfth century. In his study Singh (1991; 1993:38) has shown the parallels between the five 'gross elements' of the organism according to Hindu mythology and the five pilgrimages: Caurāsīkrośī, Pañcakrośī, Nagara Pradakṣiṇā, Avimukta and Antargrha Yātrā. These are also mapped in Eck (1993:appendix 2).

³²⁰ Dehejia (1986) shows that there is a strong connection between the Yoginīs and the Mātṛkās. Whereas the latter existed in the religious life of India for centuries, the Yoginī cult seems to have been established as late as the ninth century. The form of their worship also shows an association with Tantrism.

The first group of deities sent off by Śiva to trick Divodāsa were the sixty-four Yoginīs. An excellent study by Dehejia (1986) has examined these goddesses with regard to both their history and their close relation to Mātṛkā worship.³²⁰ It is therefore not necessary to repeat this material here. Archaeological and textual evidence indicates that the Yoginīs were generally considered in groups of sixty-four.³²¹ Because eight is an auspicious number,³²² sixty-four, the square of eight, is even more powerful and sacred. From Vedic times the number sixty-four has had magical connotations. In the Tantric tradition the number sixty-four was ascribed to the number of Āgamas and Tantras, the concept of the eight Bhairavas had developed into sixty-four Bhairavas and there were sixty-four Devī *pīṭhas* and sixty-four *siddhis*. The existence of sixty-four *siddhis* is possibly the reason why there were sixty-four Yoginīs, since they are considered able to grant *siddhis*. The relation between the *siddhis* and the Yoginīs is the fact that the *siddhis* represent 'the acquisition of supernatural powers by magical means' (MW:1216), and Yoginī is defined as 'a female demon or any being endowed with magic power, a fairy, witch, sorceress' (MW: 858).

The link between the Yoginīs and the magical powers they represent is also suggested by the architecture of their temples. All known Yoginī temples, with one exception,³²³ are circular in form and without a roof (Thomsen 1980:53). The circular form of the temple represents a *maṇḍala*. By constructing the Yoginī temples in a circle, the ideal environment for the Yoginī ritual, usually called Mahāyāga, was created. This ritual was generally considered to be a magic rite accessible only to the few initiated (Dehejia 1986:56).³²⁴ The circular plan of the Yoginī temples follows the concept of the sixty-four Yoginīs visualised in a *maṇḍala* structure as prescribed in the *Mattotara Tantra* (R. Pandey 1976: chapter 20; Dehejia 1986). The *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* describes the exploits of the sixty-four Yoginīs in chapter forty-five (see Appendix). A brief analysis of this chapter shows that the Yoginīs did not arrive in the holy city as a group but rather separately and sporadically. The names of the Yoginīs are listed from verse thirty-

³²¹ The names of the sixty-four Yoginīs varies in the different lists of the various textual sources. This suggests that the groupings of the Yoginīs varied according to region and time (Desai 1995:97).

³²² Since ancient times the number eight has been of great importance: there are eight directions which have eight guardian deities, there are eight stages in rājayoga, and Hindu architecture also mentions eight divisions.

³²³ The only Yoginī temple which is rectangular in shape is the sixty-four Yoginī temple of Khajuraho. For a detailed description of the Yoginī temple at Khajuraho see Desai 1996 and Tripathi 1974-75.

³²⁴ In her monograph on Yoginīs, Dehejia provides plenty of examples of the circular Yoginī shrines and temples throughout the north of India. (1986:chapters 4-10). An earlier valuable study of Yoginī temple architecture was provided by Thomsen (1980).

³²⁵ The present temple was constructed in 1807 CE (Harishankar 1996:54) and stands among other Devī shrines in the Bengali Ṭola. The temple is important for the many Bengali widows of the neighbourhood who visit the temple on a regular basis. The temple buzzes with festivities during the annual Navarātra *pūjās* which happen in the autumn and in the spring (Sukul 1977:99-100).

four to forty-one, after which the methods for propitiating the Yoginīs are explained. Although the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* refers to the various sixty-four Yoginīs, today they all are worshipped in one temple on Causaṭṭi Yoginī *ghāṭ*.³²⁵ Despite the fact that the temple supposedly houses the sixty-four Yoginīs, the *mūrtis* in the shrine are all known by the name of Durgā or Kālī. Only the central statue is called 'Causaṭṭi Mai'.³²⁶

Although the present Causaṭṭi Yoginī cult is now centred in one temple, there is evidence that the Yoginīs were worshipped originally in various shrines. The surviving material is too limited, however, to conclude that there were sixty-four different Yoginī shrines in the city which were situated in the form of a *maṇḍala*.³²⁷ Of the sixty-four Yoginīs, Vyās has listed fourteen whose images are found in locations other than the Causaṭṭi Yoginī temple.³²⁸ The question is whether or not it can be assumed that these fourteen Yoginī shrines are the remnants of a larger Yoginī *maṇḍala*. The different locations of these fourteen certainly do not constitute a circle but this would not prevent them being conceived of as a *maṇḍala*. Overall the lack of geographical material in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* and the fact that there is no mention of the Yoginī shrines being located in particular directions, in circles or in covers suggests that in Banaras the Yoginīs were not regarded as a *maṇḍala* by the authors of the *Khaṇḍa*.³²⁹

In contrast to the paucity of evidence regarding Yoginī worship organised as a *maṇḍala*, the twelve Sūrya shrines are clearly located according to a well structured plan. These twelve Sūrya shrines originated from the Sun who, having gone to Kāśī with the same intention as the Yoginīs, failed to drive away Divodāsa and split himself into twelve forms,³³⁰ all of which are

³²⁵ The importance of this Devī *mūrti* seems to be significant only for the Bengali community in the area of the temple as neither the temple nor Causaṭṭi Devī is considered to be among the most important goddesses of the city's religious life (Eck 1983:158).

³²⁷ It is interesting to note that Sukul does not seem to consider the sixty-four Yoginīs as all represented in the temple in the Bengali Tola for he states that 'sixty of the sixty-four Yoginīs are represented in the temple on Rāna Mahal *ghāṭ*, the other four, Vārāhī, Mayurī, Kāmākṣā and Śaktikā, are located elsewhere in the city' (Sukul 1977:99).

³²⁸ The fourteen shrines are, according to Vyās (1987:158-161): 1. Gajānanā; 2. Hayagrīvā; 3. Mayurā; 4. Vikāṭānanā; 5. Vikāṭalocanā; 6. Śuṣkodarī; 7. Śukī; 8. Kālī; 9. Ūrdhvadhṛka; 10. Tāpānī; 11. Śoṣanīdrṣṭī; 12. Atīhātāhā; 13. Kāmākṣā; 14. Sṛgalochana.

³²⁹ A possible reason for this may have been that the Banaras region was never popular ground for the Yoginī cult. A map in Dehejia's study shows that the main concentration of Yoginī temples was from the border of Rajasthan to Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. The lack of any architectural evidence does not exclude the possibility that the cult was widespread over the whole of north India. The association with Śiva and Bhairava was probably of more importance for including their names in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* than the prevalence of their cult.

³³⁰ 'O pot-born one, the following are the twelve Ādityas: Lolārka, Uttarārka, Sāmbāditya, Drupadāditya, Mayūkhāditya, Khakholka, Arunāditya, Vṛddhāditya, Keśavāditya, Vimalāditya, Gaṅgāditya and Yamāditya, the twelfth one, in the city of Kāśī. They always protect the holy place from evil ones with dominant Tāmasa quality' (KKH 46:45-47).

described in detail from chapter forty-six to chapter fifty-one of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. It also provides an account of the location of these Sūrya shrines.³³¹

The reference to twelve Sun temples in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* contrasts with the one reference of the *Kṛtyakalpataru*. Lakṣmīdhara only mentions the shrine of Lolārka at the Assi *saṅga*. Earlier in this thesis it was noted that during Gāhaḍavāla times the shrine of Lolārka was of considerable importance, grants to the shrine providing supporting evidence of this. The discrepancy between the single reference to Lolārka and the twelve Ādityas of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* can most probably be ascribed to the status of the first and the lack of status of the eleven other Sun shrines. Equally, it may be accounted for by Lakṣmīdhara's stated practice of only including those shrines for which there was textual and Puranic authority. The fact that he mentions Lolārka suggests that he had textual authority for this form of the Sun whereas for the others he did not. Eck discusses the antiquity and the popularity of the Sun cult (1993:175-182).³³² The descriptions of the various locations of the Sūrya shrines within the text of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* could be seen as geographically realistic, but the text fails to indicate the significance of the location of these shrines. For this, reference needs to be made to the unique study of the position of the twelve Āditya temples by Rana P. B. Singh and John McKim Malville, who utilised the most modern techniques in establishing that the shrines, arranged in a semicircular pattern, were astronomically aligned to the movement of the Sun in each of the twelve months of the year (1995:72-75). This is best seen in Fig. 9 which is a map of their findings. The location of these temples was deliberate but based on an organising principle other than that of a *maṇḍala*. It is clear that the authors of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* fully recognised the importance of Sun worship within Banaras because they gave a disproportionately large section to the Ādityas, both in the number of chapters and in the significant positioning of those chapters across the halfway point of the text. The authors' emphasis here is also related to the

³³¹ Lolārka is said to be 'in the southern direction, at the confluence of Assi [with the Ganga]'. Uttarārka is said to be 'in the northern side, near a *kuṇḍa*' (KKH 47:1). Uttarārka protects Kāśī forever. 'In the western quarter of Viśveśvara, the splendid idol of the Sun god bestowing auspiciousness was perfectly propitiated by the noble-souled Sāmba' (KKH 48:55). 'Drupadāditya is located in the vicinity of Daṇḍapāṇi, towards the right of Viśveśvara' (KKH 49:20-21). 'The Āditya known as Mayūkhāditya is located near the liṅga of Gabhastīśvara' (KKH 49:77-80). 'Khakholkāditya is situated to the north of Triviṣṭapa [a Śiva shrine]' (KKH 50:2). 'Arunāditya's temple is north of the Mahadev image' (KKH 51:21), 'Vṛddhāditya's image is south of Viśālākṣī' (KKH 51:29) and 'Keśavāditya is to be worshipped in the north of Ādikeśava, in the Pādokdaka *tīrtha* at the confluence of the Ganga and the Varana' (KKH 51:72-75). 'Vimalāditya is stationed in the beautiful forest of Harikeśavana' (KKH 51:83). 'South of Viśveśa is another Āditya named Gaṅgaditya' (KKH 51:101). 'East of Vireśa and west of Yameśa is the twelfth Āditya: Yamāditya' (KKH 51:106). Further on in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* there are references to two more Ādityas: Sumantvāditya (KKH 65:6) and Karṇāditya (KKH 84:45). The first of these is said to have its present temple in the Hanumān temple of Hanumān Phātak, and Karṇāditya is found at the bottom of Śītalā *ghāt* and Rājmandir, house number K 20/147.

³³² In Vārāṇasī, the substantial literary evidence of Sun worship is supplemented by the evidence of the arts. In the limited collection of art located at the Bhārat Kalā Bhavan alone, there is an eighth century Sūrya, a twelfth century Sūrya, and an eleventh century female Sun image, Cakreśvarī, from Lolārka. Elsewhere, throughout the city and its environs, Sun symbols may be seen. Lotiform Sun stones, such as the one at Sūrya *kuṇḍa*, may be found in fragments here and there, and sometimes the full image of Sūrya may be seen, such as the fine tenth to twelfth century Sūrya, mistakenly consecrated as Virupākṣa, at Kardameśvara along the Pañcakrośī road' (1993:180-181).

cosmologising of Kāśī which was largely accomplished in the first twenty-five chapters of the *Khaṇḍa* by means of the myth of Śivaśarman.

There remains one further group of deities to consider, the Aṣṭabhairavas. In present-day Banaras these eight Bhairavas, together with Kāla Bhairava, occupy a significant place in the religious life of the city although the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* dedicates only one chapter to the exploits of Kāla Bhairava (KKH 31). Further in the *Khaṇḍa*, in chapter seventy-two, verses ninety-two and ninety-three, there is a reference to eight Bhairavas which are located in the eight directions. After the description of the nine Durgās (KKH 72:90-91), who are also said to be posted in the eight directions and protecting the holy area, the eight Bhairavas are mentioned: 'Similarly there are eight Bhairavas established in the eight quarters, who always protect Kāśī, the abode of the goddess and the glory of salvation. They are Ruru, Caṇḍa, Asitāṅga, Kapālī, Krodhana, Unmattabhairava, Saṁhāra and Bhīṣaṇa in due order' (KKH 72:92-93). The presence of the Aṣṭabhairavas in the sacred geography of Kāśī lends further weight to the concept of Kāśī as a *maṇḍala*. The fact that there are eight Bhairavas, set in the eight directions, suggests the notion of a circle or enclosure of Bhairavas. The symbolisation of the *maṇḍala* as a sacred space is further enhanced by the fact that the function Bhairava fulfils in Hindu mythology is that of protector and guardian.

The cult of Bhairava is indisputably of considerable antiquity. In general the Bhairavas comprise a group of eight.³³³ Whereas the other deities who are part of the Kāśī microcosmos were sent to Kāśī by Śiva, the Bhairavas were already present in the city. The story of the appearance of Kāla Bhairava, the city's most important Bhairava, is told in chapter thirty-one of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. It relates how, when Śiva revealed himself in a *liṅga* of light, he was ridiculed by Brahmā. Out of his anger Śiva created Bhairava, the manifestation of the god's terrible aspect. Bhairava then took up the struggle against Brahmā and cut off one of Brahmā's five heads. The head, however, became glued to Bhairava's hand, as a symbol of the sin of killing a Brahmin.³³⁴ Bhairava had to wander the earth and used the head as a begging bowl. He then entered Kāśī and the skull fell (KKH 31:121-122).³³⁵ The story continues to tell of the various virtues of the holy place of Kapālamocana and of Kāla Bhairava, the name under which Bhairava became known in Banaras.

³³³ Monier-Williams lists them as Mahā, Saṁhāra, Asitāṅga, Ruru, Kāla, Krodha, Tāmracuḍa or Kapāla and Candracuḍa or Rudra (MW:767). Eck gives a slight variation of the names: Kāla and Mahā are replaced by Unmatta (the wild one) and Bhīṣana (the fearful) (1993:190).

³³⁴ In his study on the Kāpālikas or skull-bearers, Lorenzen (1972:13) states that the practice of wandering the earth with a begging skull as a way of atonement for the killing of a Brahmin was known as early as the *Yajñavalkya Smṛti*.

³³⁵ 'The moment the holy place was entered into, at the sight of Bhairava of terrible form, Brahmahatyā screamed 'Alas, alas' and entered into the lowest of the nether worlds. Even as all the people stood watching, the skull of Brahmā fell down from Rudra's hand. On seeing it fallen, he danced with great joy' (KKH 31:121-122. AITM volume 58).

Today Kāla Bhairava is still considered the most important Bhairava of the city and is known as the *kotwāl* (policeman) of Banaras because of his twofold function of devouring all the sins of his devotees and guarding the sacred territory against evil forces. His temple is in the maze of alleys not far from the General Post Office and Maidagin Park but the present location is not the original site of the Kāla Bhairava temple. As the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* suggests, the site of Kāla Bhairava is 'there where the skull fell', in other words, near the Kapālamocana *tīrtha*.³³⁶ The Kapālamocana *tīrtha* lies in the north of the city, not far from Omkāreśvara, and is known to be one of the sites which were razed during the first Muslim raids (KKH 84:46-47).³³⁷ The Kāla Bhairava *tīrtha* used to be the centre for the Kapālika sect and their descendants, the Gorakhnāthīs and the Kānpata *yogīs*. Today householders come to the temple to pray for the welfare of their families. It is a popular belief that those residing in the city ought to seek his blessing once a year. On that occasion the priest ties the typical black *mālā* around the wrist or the neck of the worshipper, symbolising the god's protection.

Within the symbolism of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* the eight Bhairavas are referred to simply as named directional protectors. No topographical details are given but their actual locations today would suggest that they formed a sort of Bhairava *maṇḍala* with Kāla Bhairava fulfilling the role of the centre around which the others are positioned. An annual celebration of the Bhairavas takes place on the eighth day of the dark half of *mārgaśīrṣa* (November to December) (Vyās 1987:77-78; Sukul 1977:210).

Looking at these three groups of deities, it is clear that the Yoginīs seem to be more of a conceptual group than an actual assembly of shrines in Banaras; the Ādityas formed a very coherent group and their shrines were established to a very specific plan which was, however, astronomically and not symbolically based. The Bhairavas have a centre and are arranged directionally with a protective function but in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* they are not conceived of as a *maṇḍala*. The question that now arises is whether it is legitimate or not to consider the fifty-six Vināyakas as a *maṇḍala*.

Neither the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, nor the later Nibandhas based upon it, mention the word '*maṇḍala*' in their description of the group of the fifty-six Vināyakas. There can be no doubt that

³³⁶ 'Honouring the holy spot Kapālamochana, Bhairava stood there himself eating up the heap of sins of his devotees' (KKH 31:138).

³³⁷ In *Varanasi Vaibhav* Sukul states that the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* does give the modern site of the Kāla Bhairav temple as well (1977:279). He supports his theory on the basis of verse fifty-six of chapter sixty-seven which describes Kāla Bhairava as south of the Ratneśvara *līṅga*. However, neither the Sanskrit-Hindi version, or the English translation of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* used in this thesis corresponds with such a verse. On the basis of this verse Sukul concludes that by the thirteenth century the original Kāla Bhairava temple had been destroyed and moved to its present area. When the Viśvanātha temple was constructed in the sixteenth century, one of the side shrines was devoted to Kāla Bhairava. The present temple, however, was constructed as late as the nineteenth century by Sardar Vinchurkar, a Commander of the Peśvās (Sukul 1974:191). The English translation of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* (AITM vol. 59) does refer to another Bhairava *tīrtha* which lies behind the Karṇāditya *tīrtha*, which is located on Daśāśvamedh *ghāt*.

these seven concentric circles, the clear outer boundary and the definite centre fulfil many of the requirements of a *maṇḍala* and some scholars have chosen to refer to the fifty-six Vināyakas as a *maṇḍala*.³³⁸ In Tripathi (1969) there is a map drawn by the author's great-grandfather around 1769 CE showing the fifty-six Vināyakas as a *maṇḍala*.³³⁹ Rana P. B. Singh and John McKim Malville, who have done such excellent work on the Sūrya shrines, have started investigating the fifty-six Vināyakas but their work is still at an initial stage. At this point it is important to see visually how the Vināyakas are represented in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* and how they are situated on the ground. Fig. 10 shows the fifty-six Vināyakas as they are given in chapter fifty-seven of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* and as they are represented in the map in Tripathi (1969). Fig. 11 is a map of Banaras plotting the existing Vināyaka shrines as they are found today with the exception of some on the Pañcakrośī Yātrā.³⁴⁰ Fig. 12 is a map of Rana P. B. Singh and John McKim Malville's initial findings which will of course be subject to considerable refinement when their work is completed. From these three maps it is quite clear that it requires a very large leap in imagination to conceive of the existing shrines as they are conceptualised in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. Even allowing for all the exigencies of history, for the movement of temples, shrines and Vināyakas, it seems highly unlikely that the situation on the ground could ever have even closely approximated to the schematic and symbolic ordering of the Vināyakas in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*.

This situation is precisely one that requires the *maṇḍala* to bring order to the random chaos of the empirical world through its symbolic representation as an ordered cosmos. The discrepancy, therefore, between the actual and the symbolic strengthens rather than weakens therefore the case for regarding the Vināyakas as a *maṇḍala*.

One interesting feature of this discrepancy is the geographical awareness shown by the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* in its descriptions. Chapter fifty-seven gives a precise description of the Vināyakas on the first circle in terms of their geographic position. The directions are mentioned for all but Arka Vināyaka, who is said to be situated at the *saṅga* of the Ganga and the Assi, and Kharva Vināyaka, who is seated at the Varana-Ganga *saṅga*. The second circle uses the Vināyakas of the first circle as the orientation for its eight Vināyakas. It also mentions that Lambodara Vināyaka is situated along the bank of the river, north of Arka Vināyaka. Śālakaṭaṅkaṭa Vināyaka's position is described as slightly north-east of Bhīmacaṇḍi Vināyaka.

³³⁸ The most important among these are Rana P. B. Singh (1987 (b); 1991; 1995), Tripathi (1969) and Eck (1978; 1986).

³³⁹ This map shows the seven circles of the Vināyakas but only the names of the Vināyakas situated on the first three circles were written, possibly because there was no space to write all the names in the smaller circles. The map resembles a Puranic world map which normally represents the world in circular rings. This map differs from Puranic maps, however, because it marks the eight directions. Tripathi considers this map as an important religio-cartographical portrayal of Kāśī.

³⁴⁰ Because Bhīmacaṇḍa (3), Dehalī (4) and Uddaṇḍa Vināyaka (5) are situated outside Banaras, in the villages on the Pañcakrośī Yātrā, it was impossible to include them in this map.

The description of the Vināyakas of the third circle follows that of the previous one with the additional information that Vakratuṇḍa is located on the river bank, north of Lambodara; Varada's position is slightly south-west from Rājaputra and Modakapriya is also on the river bank. The fourth circle is analogous to the two previous ones. Extra geographical details include the position of Abhaya Vināyaka situated on the river bank and Uddaṇḍamuṇḍa stationed in the Pilipilā *tīrtha*, south of Modakapriya. The fifth circle is the last one using previously mentioned Vināyakas as an orientation. The Vināyaka Sthūladanta is said to be on the bank of the Ganga and Nāgeśa Vināyaka is posted south of Uddaṇḍamuṇḍa, which also puts him on the river bank. The sixth circle sums up the Vināyakas and their directional position but it does not give any further information as to where they are placed in position to the aforementioned ones. The geographical details of the seventh circle are non-existent. Apart from the reference to the Moda Vināyakas³⁴¹ and to Jhāna Vināyaka, Dvāra Vināyaka and Avimukta Vināyaka, there is no indication of the relative location of these Vināyakas. The lack of detail in the description of this innermost circle can be explained in two ways. The first possible explanation is that the inner circle was so small and congested that it was difficult to locate the Vināyakas in terms of directions. The other possibility is that the relative position of these Vināyakas was such that they could never be considered as a circle. The present position of the eight Vināyakas on this innermost circle is that Pramoda, Moda, Durmukha and Sumukha are virtually in a straight line along the Viśvanātha temple (see Fig. 4). If this has always been the case then the second possible explanation is the most persuasive.

Analysing the descriptions given reveals that there was a strong sense of directionality, both of the *kṣetra* itself and of the relative positions of the Vināyakas to one another. There was also an attempt to locate the structure of the Vināyakas within Kāśī by connecting them to known sites, particularly *saṅgas*, the bank of the Ganga, or shrines.

The number eight can be explained as the sum of the four directions and the four intermediate directions, and so directionality has clearly determined the number eight for the Vināyakas in each circle. The connection of the Vināyakas to the directions has already been alluded to within this thesis. Whereas the Vināyakas are clearly suitable guardians for the directions within Kāśī, there can be no question of them being considered to be the *lokapālas* or 'protectors of the worlds', or the *digpālas* or 'protectors of directions'. This would be to elevate the Vināyakas to a cosmic role which would not only be inaccurate but also unnecessary. According to the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, because Kāśī is a microcosm of the universe, the guardians of

³⁴¹ It is interesting to note that the names of the Moda Vināyakas are not mentioned in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, a feature which may suggest that the Moda Vināyakas were well known by the time the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* was written. This will be discussed later when examining earlier religious features of Vināyaka worship in the city which were possibly adopted by the authors of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*.

the universe are counted among its residents. Chapters ten to fourteen of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*³⁴² provide a description of the worlds of these directional gods and explain how they established their separate *līṅgas* in the city. The presence of these eight cosmic regents relieves the Vināyakas of the cosmic role of protectors and thus allows them to fulfil their function as the protectors of the region or the *kṣetra* in each of the eight directions.

This then leads to the question of why there are fifty-six Vināyakas. There is no tradition, as far as can be ascertained, of the number fifty-six being associated with Vināyakas in the way that sixty-four is with Yoginīs. In fact, in other parts of India there is a group of Aṣṭavināyakas near Poona who are regarded as *svayambhū*, a group of six Vināyakas in Ujjain, and a group of five Vināyakas in Puri. Something very particular must have been required of the Vināyakas in Kāśī that their numbers were raised to such an extent. That the number had symbolic rather than actual significance is clear from the fact that the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* itself describes another eight and states there are thousands more Vināyakas in Kāśī (57:123-124). Fifty-six is seven times eight. Eight is explicable in terms of the eight directions. The number seven can be interpreted in various ways. Seven is considered to be the number of Śiva and the use of seven circles in the Vināyaka grouping could then be interpreted as being the embodiment of Śiva in the eight directions. A more philosophical interpretation for the number seven in the Vināyaka grouping is that Śiva protects his city by means of the Vināyakas in all the seven *lokas*. The Puranic sources dealing with the structure of the universe consider the cosmos as divided into seven layers or *lokas*, which individually are also divided into different layers. At the very bottom there is the *bhūloka*, followed by the *bhuvāloka* and the *svāloka*. Above these is the *maharloka* which is divided in three parts: *bhadrāśva*, *ilāvṛta* and *ketumāla*. At this stage of the cosmos is the world of salvation: once the *maharloka* is reached one can hope for entrance into the highest stage, the *brahmaloka*. The *maharloka* also functions as the axis of the middle *varṣas* and, rather than being the horizontal plane between the northern and southern spheres of *jambudvīpa*,³⁴³ it symbolises the vertical axis of the universe. In the middle of it is the mountain Meru which is regarded as the connection between the different worlds.³⁴⁴ From the *maharloka* one moves upwards through the *janaloka*, the *tapaloka* and finally reaches *brahmaloka* (Grafenhorst 1993:262-274). This vertical movement through the seven different *lokas* is also an important aspect in the symbolism of the *maṇḍala* in which there is a horizontal plane and a vertical one. It is clear that the number seven, as noted before, is recurrent in the

³⁴² Chapter ten deals with the worlds of Indra and Agni; chapter eleven with the world of Vahni; the worlds of Nirṛti and Varuṇa are described in chapter twelve; chapter thirteen is about the worlds of Gandhavatī and Alakā and chapter fourteen deals with the world of Soma.

³⁴³ *Jambudvīpa* is the representation of the Indian continent in Indian cosmology. As discussed earlier, Mount Meru is said to be the centre of this world, from where four lotus petals spread out in the four directions in order to support the four continents. *Jambudvīpa* or India is the southern petal (L. Frederic 1987:552).

³⁴⁴ In the *Brāhmaṇḍa Purāṇa* the following verse is found: 'The mountain Meru is the support of everything. It is many *yojanas* in height. Its body passes through all the fourteen worlds' (G. V. Tagare, translation in AITM).

Kāśī Khaṇḍa and is indicative both of the entire universe as it is cosmologised in *Kāśī* and also of Śiva himself.

The three characteristics of a *maṇḍala* identified earlier in this chapter are the protective boundary which divides sacred from profane space, the centre which in fact defines the world created by the *maṇḍala*, and the labyrinthine quality whereby the movement from the outside into the centre is protected and facilitated, also representing a movement from the horizontal plane to the vertical. Taking the first of these characteristics, that of a *maṇḍala* as protective, it will be recalled that the word used in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* for the concentric circles was *āvaraṇa*, which means 'cover'. The Vināyakas on the outer or first circle mark the eight directions of the circumambulatory route around the *Kāśī kṣetra*, the Pañcakrośī Yātrā.³⁴⁵ This road starts from Maṇikarṇikā *ghāṭ* and continues for fifty-five miles around the city and the nearby villages before coming back to the Viśvanātha temple. On the way no less than one hundred and eight shrines have to be visited, and there are at least forty *dharmasālās* on the route to accommodate pilgrims. All the temples, shrines and *kuṇḍas* are found on the right hand side of the route. *dharmasālās* and wells are found on the left hand side. This strict division coincides with the notion of purity and impurity in which religious undertakings have to be performed on the right, while actions relating to everyday life are performed on the left. When a sacred object or place has to be circumambulated, it must always be on the right hand side. That the outer circle of Vināyakas corresponds with the Pañcakrośī Yātrā means that the first circle of Vināyakas functions as the delineating boundary between the sacred and the non-sacred, thus purity and impurity and the sacred and profane are conceptually combined by this correspondence. As the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* states: 'The eight Vināyakas of the outer ring ward off and expel non-devotees'. This image of a sacred boundary was a familiar idea to the pilgrims entering *Kāśī* through its western gate, Dehalī Vināyaka.³⁴⁶ Before the railways brought pilgrims in their thousands, the devotees used to come into the *Kāśī kṣetra* by way of this Vināyaka, who was believed to protect the city.³⁴⁷ The outer ring of the grouping delineates a sacred space and defends that space against evil influences from outside. In chapter fifty-seven there are a number of references to the protection the Vināyakas offer to the sacred territory. Verse fifty-eight: 'I shall mention the places where Dhruṇḍhi stayed for the sake of guarding the holy spot'. Verse sixty-seven: 'These eight Vināyakas are on the outer ring of *Kāśī*. They expel non-devotees and bestow all the *siddhis* on the devotees'. The Vināyakas of the third circle are 'protecting the

³⁴⁵ For more detail on where this circumambulatory route leads, see Rana P. B. Singh (1991) and Eck (1993:350-357). Apart from describing the Pañcakrośī route, both authors also pay attention to other pilgrimage routes inside the sacred territory of *Kāśī*.

³⁴⁶ The name Dehalī Vināyaka means 'the Vināyaka of the threshold', Dehalī being 'the threshold of a door or the raised platform in front of it' (MW:497).

³⁴⁷ Conversations with Kedarnāth Vyās and Rana P. B. Singh. Singh also stated that the original Dehalī Vināyaka *mūrti* depicted Vināyaka with his hands beside him as if he protected the city. However, it should be noted that the current statue of the god is from the nineteenth or twentieth century, whereas the old statue seems to have disappeared under suspicious circumstances. This leaves some doubt about this statement's value.

tīrtha' (KKH 57:79) as are the ones on the fifth circle (KKH 57:97). After all the Vināyakas have been described, it is again emphasised that 'these Gaṇeśvaras should be remembered. They protect a man from falling into the ocean of calamities' (KKH 57:117). The outer ring of eight Vināyakas therefore meets the initial criterion for a *maṇḍala*, namely that of protecting the sacred space from the profane space outside.

The second characteristic of the symbolism of the *maṇḍala* is the existence of a centre. The fifty-six Vināyakas in their concentric circles have a definite centre in Ḍhuṇḍhirāja who in one sense is the fifty-seventh, but in another he represents all of the Vināyakas, who were brought into being by his self-division.³⁴⁸ Ḍhuṇḍhi's present position is in the middle of the seven circles of Vināyakas and he is eulogised by Śiva himself as the most important Vināyaka (KKH 57:12-15). He is called 'the foremost one among those who cause obstacles' (57:17). The Ḍhuṇḍhi *stotras* were later incorporated in the *Tristhalīsetu* and the *Tīrthaprakāśa*, thus underlining their importance (see Ḍhuṇḍhi *stotra* in the Appendix). But just as the outer circle of Vināyakas corresponds with the Pañcakrośī Yātrā in providing the outer boundary of the *maṇḍala*, so Ḍhuṇḍhirāja shares the central position with no less than Viśvanātha himself. Within the Kāśī *maṇḍala* Viśvanātha is considered to be the centre, and therefore it could be argued that the fifty-six Vināyakas are in fact centred around Viśvanātha rather than around Ḍhuṇḍhirāja, but this would be to miss the point which is that the fifty-six Vināyakas and the *maṇḍala* of Kāśī not only share the same outer border but also share the same centre.

The third characteristic of the *maṇḍala* is its labyrinthine quality. The early guidebooks to Banaras, and even some of the contemporary ones, describe a fifty-six Vināyaka *yātrā* which begins at Arka Vināyaka and goes around the outer circle to Siddhi Vināyaka, after which the second circle is entered at Lambodara Vināyaka. This process continues until the centre, Ḍhuṇḍhirāja, who offers access to Viśvanātha himself, is finally reached. This *yātrā* may be referred to in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* in verses forty-seven and forty-eight of chapter fifty-seven, which state: 'Those who have performed the annual *yātrā* on the fourth day of the bright half of the month of *māgha*, having offered *laḍḍus* made of white sesame seeds, will be worthy of being worshipped by the enemies of the Asuras. O Ḍhuṇḍhirāja! People who wish to receive the rewards of the *kṣetra* should perform a full *yātrā* on the auspicious fourth of *māgha* to please you. The reward for this *yātrā* is that all their obstacles will be destroyed'. Even if these verses did not refer to the fifty-six Vināyaka *yātrā*, it could well be that they provided the inspiration for its invention by *paṇḍits* at a later date. This *yātrā* certainly meets the criterion of the labyrinthine character of a *maṇḍala*, but it also brings out the fact that the centre has a double articulation on both the horizontal plane, where Ḍhuṇḍhirāja has divided himself and marked

³⁴⁸ That Ḍhuṇḍhi is the reason behind the fifty-six Vināyakas is also acknowledged by the story in chapter forty-two of the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa* in which Ḍhuṇḍhi, fighting a battle against the 'King of Demons', divides himself into fifty-six statues in order to win the fight (42:12).

out the entire *kṣetra*, and on the vertical plane, where Viśvanātha reaches up to eternity. On a more mundane note it has to be said that the fifty-six Vināyaka *yātrā* is very rarely performed, if at all.³⁴⁹

The three criteria set up for a *maṇḍala* are all met, therefore, by the fifty-six Vināyakas. Why then does the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* not use the word *maṇḍala*? The reason is apparent from the above discussion. There is only one *maṇḍala* and that is the Kāśī *maṇḍala* which is represented mythologically and structurally in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. The fifty-six Vināyakas share the same outer boundary as the Kāśī *maṇḍala* and effectively share the same centre. The role of the Vināyakas is threefold: to protect the sacred *kṣetra*, to remove the obstacles and hindrances of devotees, and to guarantee success of various kinds: they are the protectors, facilitators and guarantors of the efficacy of the Kāśī *kṣetra*. It would therefore have been inappropriate for the authors of the *Khaṇḍa* to have used the word *maṇḍala* for the fifty-six Vināyakas. There is no separate *maṇḍala* of Vināyakas, there is only the *maṇḍala* of Kāśī.

While this answers the primary question raised by this chapter, there remain a number of further points to clarify concerning the composition and situation of the Vināyakas. These are matters that need to be addressed before seeking in the Conclusion to establish a date for the conceptualisation of the fifty-six Vināyakas.

The first of these points relates to the situation of the Vināyakas. When examining the location of the Vināyakas it is clear that a large number of the shrines are situated near water, whether a *kuṇḍa*, a *kūpa* or the bank of the Ganga. This proximity to water can be explained in various ways. The following list illustrates the connection:

1. Arka Vināyaka	Lolārka <i>kuṇḍa</i> .
2. Durga Vināyaka	Durgā <i>kuṇḍa</i> and Durgā temple.
3. Bhīmacaṇḍi Vināyaka	Ghandarosāgara and Devī temple.
4. Dehalī Vināyaka	Situated near a <i>kuṇḍa</i> of which the name is not known. ³⁵⁰
5. Uddaṇḍa Vināyaka	Near a <i>kūpa</i> constructed in the late seventeenth century.
6. Pāśapāṇi Vināyaka	Near a <i>kūpa</i> .
7. Kharva Vināyaka	Near the Varana and Ganga <i>saṅga</i> .

³⁴⁹ Personal communication from *paṇḍit* Vyās.

³⁵⁰ The *kuṇḍa* near Dehalī Vināyaka does not have a particular name: however, in the *Tīrthavivecana Khaṇḍa* Lakṣmīdhara does mention a *kuṇḍa* called Vināyaka *kuṇḍa*. Neither Rana P. B. Singh nor any of the *paṇḍits* I worked with were able to give any further information about this *kuṇḍa* or its location in Banaras. Singh suggested that there is a possibility that the *kuṇḍa* at Dehalī Vināyaka may have been the Vināyaka *kuṇḍa*. However, since no other shrines, *kuṇḍas* or temples of the Pañcakrośī Yātrā feature in the *Kṛtyakalpataru*, this seems very unlikely.

8. Siddhi Vināyaka	Near Maṇikarṇikā <i>ghāt</i> .
9. Lambodara Vināyaka	Lālī <i>ghāt</i> .
10. Kūṭadanta Vināyaka	Near Kṛmi <i>kuṇḍa</i> .
11. Śālakaṭankaṭa Vināyaka	Near Marwaḍi Talab.
12. Kūṣmāṇḍa Vināyaka	Near Kūṣmāṇḍa Devī shrine and near a well.
13. Muṇḍa Vināyaka	Near a <i>kūpa</i> .
14. Vikaṭadvija Vināyaka	Near Dhūpchaṇḍi <i>kuṇḍa</i> .
15. Rājaputra Vināyaka	Near the Varana-Ganga <i>saṅga</i> .
16. Praṇava Vināyaka	On Trilocana <i>ghāt</i> .
17. Vakratuṇḍa Vināyaka	On Raṇamahāl <i>ghāt</i> .
18. Ekadanta Vināyaka	
19. Trimukha Vināyaka	
20. Pañcāsya Vināyaka	On Pisācamocana <i>kuṇḍa</i> .
21. Heramba Vināyaka	
22. Vighnarāja Vināyaka	On Citrakuṭa <i>kuṇḍa</i> .
23. Varada Vināyaka	On Prahlād <i>ghāt</i> .
24. Modakapriya Vināyaka	Near a <i>kūpa</i> , which is known as one of the three oldest <i>kūpas</i> in the city.
25. Abhaya Vināyaka	On Daśāśvamedh <i>ghāt</i> .
26. Siṅghatuṇḍa Vināyaka	
27. Kūṇitākṣa Vināyaka	At the back of Lakṣmī <i>kuṇḍa</i> .
28. Kṣipraprasādana Vināyaka	On Piṭṛ <i>kuṇḍa</i> .
29. Cintāmaṇi Vināyaka	On Īśvargaṅgī <i>kuṇḍa</i> .
30. Dantahasta Vināyaka	Near Lohtiya <i>kuṇḍa</i> . ³⁵¹
31. Piciṇḍila Vināyaka	On Prahlāda <i>ghāt</i> .
32. Uddaṇḍamuṇḍa Vināyaka	
33. Sthūladanta Vināyaka	On Mān Mandir <i>ghāt</i> .
34. Kalipriya Vināyaka	
35. Caturdanta Vināyaka	On Dhruveśvara <i>kūpa</i> .
36. Dvimukha Vināyaka	On Sūrya <i>kuṇḍa</i> .
37. Jyeṣṭha Vināyaka	On Jyeṣṭeśvara <i>kūpa</i> which is now filled up.
38. Gaja Vināyaka	
39. Kāla Vināyaka	On Rām <i>ghāt</i> .
40. Nāgeśa Vināyaka	On Bhoṅsla <i>ghāt</i> .
41. Āśā Vināyaka	On Mīr <i>ghāt</i> , near the Dharma <i>kūpa</i> .

³⁵¹ This *kuṇḍa* is now filled up, and a fence is the only indication of its presence.

42. Sṛṣṭi Vināyaka	Near the Śukra kūpa.
43. Yakṣa Vināyaka	In Brahmapuri, near the Brahma kūpa.
44. Gajakarṇa Vināyaka	
45. Citraghaṇṭa Vināyaka	The statue in Rāṇī Kūā is close to a tank which is now filled up. The second possibility, situated on the road to Cauk thāna, is not near a kūpa.
46. Sthūlajaṅgha Vināyaka	For this Vināyaka there are several options. Apart from the one in which it is claimed that he is situated in Rāṇī Kūā, there is no link with a water source.
47. Maṅgala Vināyaka	On Bāla ghāṭ.
48. Maṇikarṇa Vināyaka	On the ghāṭ.
Mitra Vināyaka	On Scindia ghāṭ.
49-53. Moda Vināyakas	They are supposedly linked with the Jñāna Vāpī well.
54. Jñāna Vināyaka	Beside the Jñāna Vāpī well.
55. Dvāra Vināyaka	
56. Avimukta Vināyaka	Also linked with the Jñāna Vāpī well. ³⁵²

The question which needs to be addressed is whether these Vināyakas were chosen to be part of the group of fifty-six because they were situated near a kuṇḍa, a kūpa or the Ganga, or whether the proximity to water is purely coincidental. It must not be forgotten that until the nineteenth century the Anandavana was full of inland lakes, wells and even small tributaries to the Ganga, so that it would have been difficult for a shrine not to have been situated near water. On the other hand, Chapter Two discusses the association of elephants and yakṣas with water. Both of these two were formative elements in the creation of the elephant-headed Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa. In her study of Gaṇapati (1997), Thapan demonstrates a connection between Vināyaka and the nāgas, who also are closely linked to water. It is possible to consider the Vināyakas' location near to water as resonant of their earlier history. It is, of course, a commonplace that water is potent in Hindu culture and necessary for the successful functioning of a temple, as it is required for ritual ablutions. Whether, therefore, there was a specific reason to locate Vināyakas close to water because of their historical associations, or whether they are thus located following the normal Hindu instinct, or whether the connection is entirely coincidental, cannot be answered. In attempting the full documentation of the Vināyakas it would, however, be negligent to ignore this feature.

³⁵² I would like to express my thanks to Professor Rana P. B. Singh for pointing out some of the water sources which are no longer present in Banaras.

One of the most peculiar features of the fifty-six Vināyaka grouping is the fact that in the Kāśī Khaṇḍa fifty-seven instead of fifty-six Vināyakas are mentioned within the group, thus disrupting the ideal model of eight times seven. 'In the north-eastern direction Maṅgala Vināyaka is protecting the city. Mitra Vināyaka is to be worshipped in the north of the Yama tīrtha' (KKH 57:111-112).³⁵³ This verse states that on the sixth circle of Vināyakas there is an additional Vināyaka, thus bringing the number of Vināyakas on the sixth ring to nine and the total of Vināyakas mentioned within the group of Vināyakas to fifty-seven. Whereas Mitra Vināyaka is mentioned everywhere in later Sanskrit versions of the Kāśī Khaṇḍa, other works dealing with pilgrimages and the religious life of the city have continued to use the number fifty-six, thus omitting Mitra or another Vināyaka. An earlier account of the fifty-six Vināyakas has already shown that there is confusion about the Vināyakas called Citraghaṇṭa, Sthūlajaṅgha, Maṅgala and Mitra. The two post-Kāśī Khaṇḍa Nibandhas, the Tristhalīsetu (198-200) and the Tīrthaprakāśa (209-210), do not mention Mitra Vināyaka as part of the yātrā, neither is he mentioned in the various Hindi booklets describing the different pilgrimages of Kāśī. The Kāśīyātrāprakāśa of 1906 states that 'Mitra Vināyaka is referred to in the Kāśī Khaṇḍa but some people call him Maṅgala Vināyaka'. The fact that Mitra Vināyaka is included in the list of the fifty-six Vināyakas, allowing the regular pattern of seven times eight to be disrupted, indicates that Mitra Vināyaka must have acquired a certain importance by the time of the composition of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. Analysis shows that Lakṣmīdhara did not mention any Vināyaka with that name among the five Vināyakas, but much earlier, in the *Mitākṣarā version of the Yājñavalkya Smṛti*, one of the Vināyakas was called Mitra. A possible explanation for the fact that Mitra Vināyaka was added to the group of fifty-six Vināyakas is that he had acquired a certain status on the base of the reference to him in the Smṛti.³⁵⁴ Another possible explanation is that in the period when the Kāśī Khaṇḍa was composed there was already some sort of confusion between Maṅgala and Mitra Vināyaka. The city had already been destroyed once and it is not unlikely that the chaos this destruction brought created confusion as to which Vināyaka was which. The fact that Mitra was included suggests that the authors felt obliged to include him, perhaps because they were under pressure from some local paṇḍit or because they were uncertain about the whole situation.

Having mentioned the fifty-six Vināyakas, the Kāśī Khaṇḍa states that there are 'Thousands, nay innumerable forms, of the Gaṇeśa Dhuṇḍhi there, devoutly worshipped by many devotees'. This throws more light on the Vināyaka cult of the medieval period. By referring to many thousands more, the authors of the Kāśī Khaṇḍa make it clear that the fifty-

³⁵³ The English translation by G. V. Tagare of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* omits Maṅgala Vināyaka and states: 'That auspicious Vināyaka named Mitra Vināyaka protects the city of Īśa in the north-east. He is to be worshipped in the north of the Yama tīrtha' (KKH in AITM volume 59:57).

³⁵⁴ It could be argued that if Mitra had an important status in the religious life of the city he should have been mentioned by Lakṣmīdhara: but, as has been pointed out earlier, Lakṣmīdhara did omit rather a lot of the religious places which became important in later times. It is therefore also possible that Mitra rose to his current status after the twelfth century.

six Vināyakas are definitely not the only ones which were worshipped at the time, but it also sets the fifty-six Vināyakas apart as a group which was considered more important than the other Vināyakas. Six more Vināyakas are named: Bhagīratha, Gaṇādhyākṣa, Hariścandra, Vināyaka, Kaparda and Bindu (KKH 57:124). In analogy with Mitra Vināyaka it can be assumed that these Vināyakas played some role in the sacred geography of the city but they were not considered important enough, or there was no room left for them, to be included in the fifty-six. *The question remains unanswered* as to what exactly determined the status of each of the Vināyaka shrines. The presence in chapter fifty-seven of Mitra Vināyaka and the six Vināyakas mentioned above does raise questions as to why only fifty-six Vināyakas were chosen to form the maṇḍala. Other sacred numbers such as sixty-four or one hundred and eight could have been chosen, since there were apparently numerous Vināyakas worshipped in Kāśī. Here it needs to be mentioned that the Merutantra, a twentieth-century Tantric text, counts sixty-four Vināyakas instead of fifty-six.³⁵⁵ However, in this text it is stated that the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* only refers to fifty-six Vināyakas and that number is regarded as being the right number.

At the end of the description of the fifty-six Vināyaka maṇḍala, five Vināyakas are mentioned as the Moda Vināyakas.³⁵⁶ 'The five Vināyakas are Moda and the others; the sixth one is Jñāna Vināyaka, the seventh one is Dvāra Vighneśa present in front of the great door. Avimukta Vināyaka, the eighth one, removes all the distress of those with humble minds in my holy spot Avimukta' (KKH 57:113-114). The first reference to the names of these five Vināyakas is found in the *Tristhalīsetu* in which their names are Pramoda, Moda, Sumukha, Durmukha and Gaṇanātha (TS:198-100). The later *Tīrthaprakāśa* mentions the same names, which suggests that from the sixteenth century onwards these five names were accepted as the names for the Moda Vināyakas. From the reference in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* and in the *Gurucaritra* it is evident that the Moda Vināyakas were considered to be a group of five Vināyakas. It is difficult to know whether in the thirteenth century the Moda Vināyakas were also considered to have individual identities, each with their own name. The similarity between Pañca-Vināyaka worship and the Moda Vināyakas, also being five, is striking. It is here assumed that the Moda Vināyakas originated from the concept of Pañca-Vināyaka worship, although no explanation can be given for the difference in names. The *devapaṭṭas* and *śilpapāṭṭas* on which the Pañca-Vināyaka concept is represented give evidence of the importance of five Vināyaka worship in Banaras. The representation of the Pañca-Vināyakas on panels corresponds with their significance in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* where they are said to be situated on the inner circle, closest to the main shrine of the city. Although the Vināyakas mentioned in the *Kṛtyakalpataru* have

³⁵⁵ There are some slight differences between the *Merutantra* and the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* concerning the names of the Vināyakas: Ekadanta is Dantura; Trimukha is Trivadana; Varad is omitted; Kūṇitākṣa is Kūpitākṣa; Uddaṇḍa Muṇḍa is called Heramba; Dvituṇḍa is Dvituṇḍākṣa; Maṇikarṇa is omitted, as are Āśā and Sthūlajāṅgha. Mitra Vināyaka is there but because Āśā and Sthūlajāṅgha are omitted there only are six Vināyakas on the sixth enclosure (*Merutantra*, 1908).

³⁵⁶ For the location of the Moda Vināyakas, see Fig. 4: MV is Moda Vināyaka, PV is Pramoda Vināyaka, DV is Durmukha Vināyaka, SV is Sumukha Vināyaka and GV is Gaṇanātha Vināyaka.

different names, the evolution of the Moda Vināyakas from these five Vināyakas is suggestive. The Pañca-Vināyaka concept is elsewhere in the city attested by the Pañcāmṛta Vināyakas in Dūdh Vināyaka Mohalla. These five Vināyakas are Dūdh, Dahi, Gṛta, Madhu and Śaṅkara Vināyaka. A sixteenth-century text, the *Gīrvāṇapada Mañjari* by Varadarāja, mentions the *mohalla* which suggests that these five Vināyakas were then considered as an established group within the religious life of the city. Dūdh Vināyaka is still a very prominent Vināyaka in this neighbourhood. Although in the sixteenth century these Vināyakas obviously had acquired a certain status, there is no mention to any of them in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, thus suggesting that their rise to prominence occurred during the Muslim period.

Finally, it is necessary to consider the problem attendant upon Ḍhuṇḍhi Vināyaka.³⁵⁷ The earliest reference to Ḍhuṇḍhirāja is found in the *Kṛtyakalpataru* in which Ḍhuṇḍhi is hailed as the first and foremost among the Pañca-Vināyakas. Since there is little more known than the fact that there was a Pañca-Vināyaka worship in which Ḍhuṇḍhi had an important status, it is difficult to estimate when a Vināyaka named Ḍhuṇḍhi became prevalent in Banaras and why Ḍhuṇḍhi acquired his prestige. Within the present context of the twenty-one most important Gaṇeśa shrines in India, Ḍhuṇḍhi is unmistakably connected only with Kāśī (B. R. Sharma 1975 (a):21-23). Considering that the *Līṅga Purāṇa* was the source for the *Kṛtyakalpataru*'s description of the Pañca-Vināyakas, it can be argued that Ḍhuṇḍhi must have acquired his elevated status during an earlier period, possibly around the eighth or ninth century. The Ḍhuṇḍhi *stotra* in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* and the importance which is attached to the deity clearly indicate the elevation of his status, which took place at an earlier stage. Contrary to the *Tīrthavivecana Khaṇḍa*, the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* does give the location of Ḍhuṇḍhirāja, which is in the vicinity of Viśvanātha. Hypotheses concerning his location at the time of the twelfth-century Nibandha can be constructed. It could be argued that Ḍhuṇḍhi, because of his later association with Viśvanātha, originally occupied a shrine near Avimukta, who during the Gāhaḍavāla period was the main deity of the city, and that after the decline in power of Avimukta his status became associated with the new presiding god, Viśvanātha. Another possibility is that Ḍhuṇḍhi, despite his importance, was not connected with the Avimukta cult and was located somewhere else in the city, and that the association with Viśvanātha occurred as late as the period of the composition of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. In that case it can be argued that the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, as a eulogy of Viśvanātha, brought any other existing god under the umbrella of Viśveśvara. Because his status seems to have been established by the twelfth century, it is unlikely that the deity moved to another area a century later. Sukul's argument that the original site of Ḍhuṇḍhi could have been the present location of Rājaputra Vināyaka can thus be ignored. Ḍhuṇḍhi possibly formed part of the Pañca-Vināyaka worship as early as the ninth or tenth centuries, which resulted in a reference in the *Līṅga Purāṇa* which formed the source for

³⁵⁷ The location of Ḍhuṇḍhi is indicated on Fig. 4 by the letter D.

the *Tīrthavivecana Khaṇḍa* of the *Kṛtyakalpataru*. However, this reference does not suggest the importance of the god other than in the Pañca-Vināyaka worship. It is likely, therefore, that the organisation of the fifty-six Vināyakas took place after the composition of the *Liṅga Purāṇa*, thus explaining why it was omitted both by the *Purāṇa* and by Lakṣmīdhara.

Whereas there is no geographical information about Ḍhuṇḍhi's location provided by the twelfth-century *Kṛtyakalpataru*, the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* refers to his shrine as being near the Jñāna Vāpī well. 'A devotee takes his holy bath in Maṇikarṇikā along with the cloth worn and walks ahead [not minding] the feet getting soiled. He offers libation to the celestial sages, human beings and the manes. He then comes to Jñānoda *tīrtha* and worships you' (KKH 57:35). Further, there is another geographical clue: 'First, you are Ḍhuṇḍhirāja slightly to my right. You seek out and bestow all the desired objects and wealth on the devotees' (KKH 57:43). These verses indicate that at the time of the composition of the *Khaṇḍa*, the shrine of Ḍhuṇḍhi was near Jñāna Vāpī and the Viśvanātha temple. Today the shrine of Ḍhuṇḍhi is still in the vicinity of Viśvanātha but the present statue is of a late date and is the subject of a whole controversy, which not only gives evidence of the difficulties of locating the original site but also suggests that the worship of Ḍhuṇḍhi, like that of the fifty-six Vināyakas, was continuous. The small shrine to Ḍhuṇḍhi is situated on the left hand side as one enters the Viśvanātha *galī* leading to the temple. The roughly-hewn features of the statue may suggest an early date but the statue is dated to the eighteenth century. Most of the pilgrims who visit the shrine today do not realise that this Ḍhuṇḍhi *mūrti* used to be the centre of a controversy in which several Vināyaka *mūrtis* vied with one another for the title of Ḍhuṇḍhirāja. In his book Sukul notes that until fifty years ago the present Ḍhuṇḍhirāja was not considered to be the real one, as the Ādi Ḍhuṇḍhirāja of that time was the Pañcamukha Vināyaka in the Rāṇī Bhavānī temple (Sukul 1977:348). This story was confirmed by the *paṇḍit* of this Pañcamukha Vināyaka.³⁵⁸ The place of this Pañcamukha Vināyaka is above the present shrine in the temple of Nīlakaṇṭheśvara, whose construction was also commissioned by Rāṇī Bhavānī.³⁵⁹

The tradition is that the present Ḍhuṇḍhirāja was established by a Peśvā king or merchant who, when visiting the temples and shrines late in the evening, found the Ḍhuṇḍhi shrine in the Nīlakaṇṭheśvara temple closed. Disappointed by the fact that he could not worship Ḍhuṇḍhi, he decided that pilgrims should always have the opportunity to visit Ḍhuṇḍhi and

³⁵⁸ Interview with *paṇḍit* Sharma, January 29, 1997.

³⁵⁹ The statue of this Pañcamukha Vināyaka is described by Yadav (1997:37 and plate 15). 'It is a five-faced, four-armed seated image. The genital organ is prominently indicated. He has worn a *karaṇḍa mukuṭa*. The attributes in hands are a *danta* in the lower right, *padma* in the upper right, a *nāga pāśa* in the upper left and a *modaka pātra* in the lower left hand. His normal middle trunk is hanging straight with its tip turned towards the left. The two right sided trunks are turned towards the right and the two left sided trunks are turned towards the left. The third eye is visible'. Yadav attributes this Vināyaka to the late medieval period. Martin-Dubost also includes this Vināyaka in his book and believes it actually is a 'Heramba Vināyaka' because of the lion figure on the right foot. He dates it to the sixteenth or seventeenth century (1997:180, plate 108).

therefore gave the order to establish a new *Ḍhuṇḍhi mūrti*.³⁶⁰ Despite the fact that the construction or consecration of the new *mūrti* is not officially recorded,³⁶¹ the story proves to be true. The eighteenth century was a period in which the Marāṭhas were very active in the city and both the Peśvās and Rāṇī Bhavānī patronised a number of the temples and shrines. Considering that the Pañcamukha Vināyaka of the Rāṇī Bhavānī temple was believed to be Ādi Ḍhuṇḍhi, new questions are raised as to the identity of Ḍhuṇḍhi. Why was a Pañcamukha Vināyaka called Ḍhuṇḍhi, or why did Ḍhuṇḍhi suddenly become represented with five heads in the eighteenth century? There do not seem to be clear answers to these questions, and various theories have been advanced.

Before embarking on an analysis of the historical facts it is important to cite a *śloka* taken from the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa*. The forty-third chapter eulogises Ḍhuṇḍhirāja who had killed the king of the demons. All the gods of heaven worshipped Ḍhuṇḍhi: 'In this way he was worshipped and he was wrapped with seven covers. While being present in Varanasi, all fifty-six Vināyakas protect him. There at the gate of Śiva, a Gaṇeśa with five faces stayed' (*Gaṇeśa Purāṇa, Kṛīḍa Khaṇḍa*, 43:9-10).³⁶² This verse of the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa* indicates the presence of a five-faced Gaṇeśa at the time of the composition of the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa* but it does not state whether or not that Pañcamukha Vināyaka was Ḍhuṇḍhi. This seems very unlikely because a verse of the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa* suggests that the Pañcamukha Vināyaka is one of the many Vināyakas which reside in Kāśī: 'The others with various names stay pervading Varanasi. All Gaṇeśas came to stay there after Śiva had stayed' (*Kṛīḍa Khaṇḍa* 42:11).

It is difficult to imagine that anybody could establish a new *mūrti* of a deity of the importance of Ḍhuṇḍhirāja when another statue was already consecrated as such. Therefore one must consider that Pañcamukha Vināyaka is indeed of an earlier date than the present Ḍhuṇḍhirāja. The reference to Ḍhuṇḍhirāja in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* indicates that Ḍhuṇḍhi's position in the city was near the Jñāna Vāpī well and at the right hand of Śiva, which suggests that at the time of the composition there was a Ḍhuṇḍhi shrine or that it had been there before being destroyed by the Muslims. There is little doubt that this shrine had disappeared by the sixteenth century and that it was reconstructed under the supervision of Ṭodar Mal and Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa. However, a century later the Viśvanātha temple and its adjacent shrines were all razed by Aurangzeb's armies, leaving everything in ruins again. When in the middle of the eighteenth century Rāṇī Bhavānī came to Banaras, the Viśvanātha temple had not yet been reconstructed. There are no documents giving reasons for her choosing to build a

³⁶⁰ The story behind the new Ḍhuṇḍhi was told to me by the *paṇḍit* and his wife, although they do not have any idea whether the Marāṭha was a Peśvā nobleman or a merchant. It is also narrated in Sukul's book (1977:348-349).

³⁶¹ The Public Record Office in Vārāṇasī does not have a record of the construction of the new Ḍhuṇḍhi shrine, nor has the Rāṇī Bhavānī Trust in the Bengali *ṭola*. Because of the many property disputes in recent years, many official records have gone missing. Fieldwork revealed that a lot of Brahmin families falsely claim to be the heirs of temples and shrines.

³⁶² Translated into English by D. Tripathi.

Nilakanṭheśvara temple, but the secretary of the Rāṇī Bhavānī trust suggested that it was because her deceased husband was named Nilakanṭha.³⁶³ The question remains as to why she chose to establish a Pañcamukha Vināyaka. There are two possible hypotheses. When Rāṇī Bhavānī came to the city, the Marāṭhas had already acquired a major influence in religious life: there were a great number of Marāṭhī *paṇḍits*, and the Peśvās patronised the reconstruction of the holy city.³⁶⁴ Earlier it has been suggested that the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa* was partly written in Banaras (see Chapter Three). The verse referring to the five-headed Vināyaka does indeed suggest a thorough knowledge of the city and its sacred spots: it therefore could be that, if the establishment of the *mūrti* preceded the composition of the *Purāṇa*, the Pañcamukha Vināyaka of Rāṇī Bhavānī led to the acceptance of this Vināyaka in the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa*.

A second hypothesis is that Rāṇī Bhavānī had been influenced by the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa* when establishing her Vināyaka statue. If this is so, there is another problem to take into account. The *Upa-Purāṇa* makes it clear that the reference to the Pañcamukha Vināyaka was referring to an existing feature within the religious life of the city, thus indicating that, if Rāṇī Bhavānī had not yet established her five-faced Vināyaka, there was another similar Vināyaka situated at the gate of Śiva. Surprisingly enough there is such a *mūrti*, fifty metres away from the temple built by Rāṇī Bhavānī and the present Ḍhuṇḍhi shrine. This other Pañcamukha Vināyaka has been known since the early seventies as Yakṣa Vināyaka (Sukul 1977:348-349) and is not to be confused with the Yakṣa Vināyaka on the sixth circle of the fifty-six Vināyaka *maṇḍala*. Sukul declared that this Vināyaka was sometimes also called Ḍhuṇḍhirāja (*ibid.*). The statue represents Gaṇeśa with a head in the middle and two heads at each side, the trunks of the four side heads curling into the air. The Vināyaka is depicted in a dancing pose. P. K. Agarwal (1977:154-155; see also Yadav 1997:37, plate 16) has dated this figure to the sixteenth or seventeenth century. His present position is in a small temple, on the top of some steps, on the left side before entering the actual Viśvanātha lane and Ḍhuṇḍhirāja. The presence of this Pañcamukha Vināyaka and its date make it possible that it was this Vināyaka which was the model for the verse in the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa*. However, if this is accepted as an explanation for the reference in the *Purāṇa*, then why did Rāṇī Bhavānī establish another five-faced Vināyaka? Was she advised to do so or was it an act of rivalry between the Bengalis and the Maharashtrians? Or maybe the Pañcamukha Vināyaka which is currently known as Yakṣa Vināyaka was established on its present location after Rāṇī Bhavānī's image?

³⁶³ The secretary of the Rāṇī Bhavānī Trust, named Mr. Pāl, told me that she constructed a Nilakanṭheśvara temple because her deceased husband was so called.

³⁶⁴ From 1735 CE onwards the Peśvās started the construction of several *ghāṭs*, and Caukhamba and Thatheri *bazār* were developed from woodland. At the beginning of the eighteenth century Marāṭha Brahmins made up one third of the Brahmin population (R. P. B. Singh 1993:282; J. P. Mishra 1986:171-178). Bayly (1983:282) explains the influx of Marāṭha immigrants in the religious life of Banaras as the result of the rise to power of the Chitpawan Brahmins in Marāṭha politics after 1750 CE and the fact that Kāśī was considered to be the ultimate centre of the Brahmanical cult.

A third possible hypothesis which might be considered is that the five-faced Yakṣa Vināyaka was located in the vicinity of the Viśvanātha temple and reconstructed in the late sixteenth century before it was again destroyed. During the destruction of the temple the statue, which is about one metre in height, might have been saved, as often was the case, and kept somewhere until it was safe to re-establish it. When Rāṇī Bhavānī gave the order to establish her five-faced Vināyaka the Viśvanātha temple had not yet been re-erected, so it could be that Rāṇī Bhavānī, following the reference in the *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa*, decided to build a Pañcamukha Vināyaka in the vicinity where the Viśveśvara temple had been. When, later, the original Pañcamukha Vināyaka resurfaced, it was placed in another shrine a bit further down the lane. The change of name of the latter Vināyaka indicates that there has been a legal battle concerning the authenticity of this Vināyaka, although I have not come across anybody who could remember it. Most people in the neighbourhood call both the five-faced Vināyakas 'Pañcamukha'.

The motivation for the construction of another Pañcamukha Vināyaka is shrouded in mystery but the whole controversy around the two five-faced Vināyakas and Ḍhuṇḍhirāja does give us more insight into the original Ḍhuṇḍhirāja. The *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa*'s reference to the five-faced Vināyaka suggest that the Pañcamukha Vināyaka is not Ḍhuṇḍhirāja but another Vināyaka which probably was not considered to be among the fifty-six Vināyakas. The fact that sitting at the gate of Śiva there are two five-faced Gaṇeśas who both used to be known as Ādi Ḍhuṇḍhirāja suggests that there has been a confusion. The verse of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* leaves no doubt that the place of Ḍhuṇḍhi was to the right of Viśvanātha, near the Jñāna Vāpī well. Although it could be argued that the expression 'sitting at the right hand' means that one is considered to be a close associate, it would be negligent to ignore this detail as information about the original site of Ḍhuṇḍhi. Looking at the present situation it can be seen that Ḍhuṇḍhirāja is sitting at the left hand side of Viśvanātha. Even if the sixteenth-century site of the temple is taken into account Ḍhuṇḍhi, and thus also the two Pañcamukha Vināyakas, are at the left. Left and right depend on the position of the viewer, but considering the directions with north as a point of reference, Ḍhuṇḍhi is on the left hand side (see Fig. 4).

Considering the earlier sites for the Viśvanātha mandir, during the Gahadavala period the temple was supposedly situated on the site of the Razziya mosque, at the other side of the road to Cauk (Sukul 1977:178; Motichand 1985:190; E. C. volume XV:298; Eck 1993:132-133). From the *Tīrthavivecana Khaṇḍa* it is clear that Ḍhuṇḍhi was the first and the foremost Vināyaka who had to be worshipped at that time, although the Khaṇḍa does not refer to any details regarding the site of this Ḍhuṇḍhi and therefore it cannot be assumed that Ḍhuṇḍhi was situated in the vicinity of the Viśvanātha temple located on the site of the Razziya mosque. If Ḍhuṇḍhirāja had his shrine there then that position would have corresponded with the right hand side of Viśvanātha. There are no details as to whether in the twelfth century Ḍhuṇḍhi was

already located near Viśvanātha, and therefore it can only be assumed that the original Ḍhuṇḍhi shrine was destroyed during the Muslim raids. The reference to the place of Ḍhuṇḍhi in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* does indicate that in the period of the composition of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* the shrine of Ḍhuṇḍhi was to the right of Viśvanātha, and if the temple was close by the Razziya mosque then the current position of the Pañcamukha Vināyaka whose present name is Yakṣa Vināyaka corresponds to that.

However, this has not explained why the Pañcamukha Vināyakas both became known under the name Ḍhuṇḍhirāja. One possibility is that in the thirteenth century the Ḍhuṇḍhi shrine was situated in the vicinity of the present Pañcamukha Vināyaka which is dated to the sixteenth or seventeenth century. After the period of religious revival of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Muslims raided the city several times, destroying everything which was sacred to the Hindus. We may assume that if there was a Ḍhuṇḍhi shrine then it was also demolished at that time. During the reconstruction of the Viśvanātha temple on the site where the Aurangzeb mosque now stands, it was decided to re-establish Ḍhuṇḍhi's shrine. If his position had been the same as his present location then they might have preferred to reconstruct the shrine in its original place, regardless of the fact that he is supposed to be at Viśvanātha's right hand. During this period of revival the outlook of the *mūrti* might not have been an important matter, thus allowing a five-faced Gaṇeśa to be consecrated as Ḍhuṇḍhi. When the whole neighbourhood was destroyed by Aurangzeb the five-faced statue might have been rescued. When Rāṇī Bhavānī constructed her Nilakanṭheśvara temple with another five-faced Vināyaka, the older five-faced Vināyaka might not have come to the surface yet. Probably the Bengali queen followed some *paṇḍits* advice in reconstructing a five-faced Gaṇeśa, as there had previously been one at the gate of the Viśvanātha temple which had claimed the name of Ḍhuṇḍhi.³⁶⁵ In conclusion it could be suggested that the confusion between the five-faced Vināyaka and Ḍhuṇḍhirāja originated in the chaos that followed the aftermath of the Muslim invasions. But how can one explain that a Marāṭha prince of merchants was allowed to found another Ḍhuṇḍhi shrine underneath? Since there are no records of this, it has to be assumed that by the time this Marāṭha visited the city in the middle of the eighteenth century, the situation had changed in the sense that the Marāṭhas controlled both the religious and the political life. When the Marāṭha proposed building another Ḍhuṇḍhi shrine it might have happened that *paṇḍits* looked into the matter and decided that, since Ḍhuṇḍhi is not mentioned anywhere as having five heads, the Pañcamukha Vināyaka of Rāṇī Bhavānī could not be the actual Ḍhuṇḍhirāja. The Marāṭha powers in the city probably then had the proposal to construct a new Ḍhuṇḍhi shrine accepted.

³⁶⁵ It would be illogical to believe that Rāṇī Bhavānī would have been allowed to construct a Ḍhuṇḍhi shrine and image if there already was one .



Fig. 7. Map prepared by James Prinsep (1831).
Map taken from Sukul (1974).

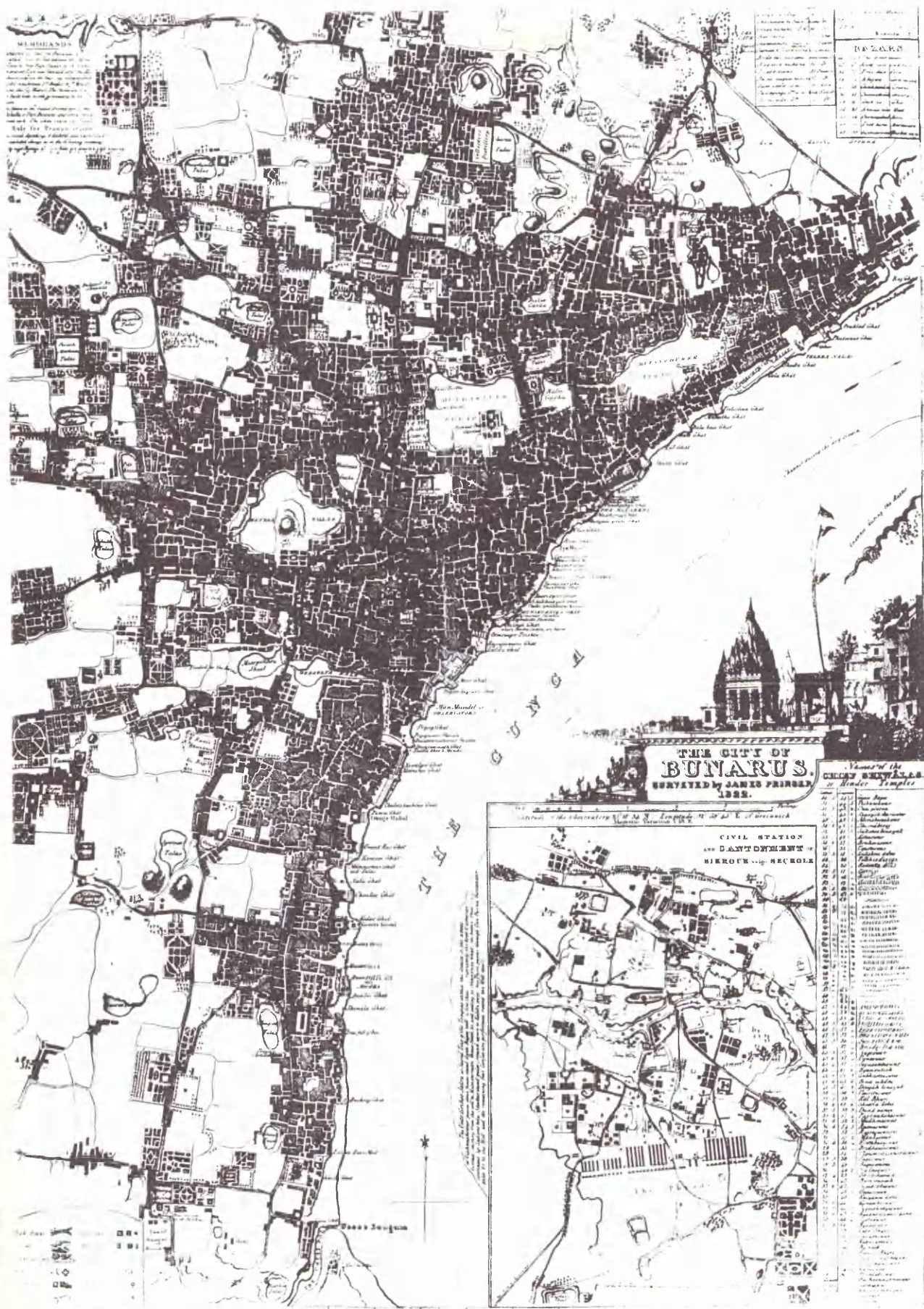
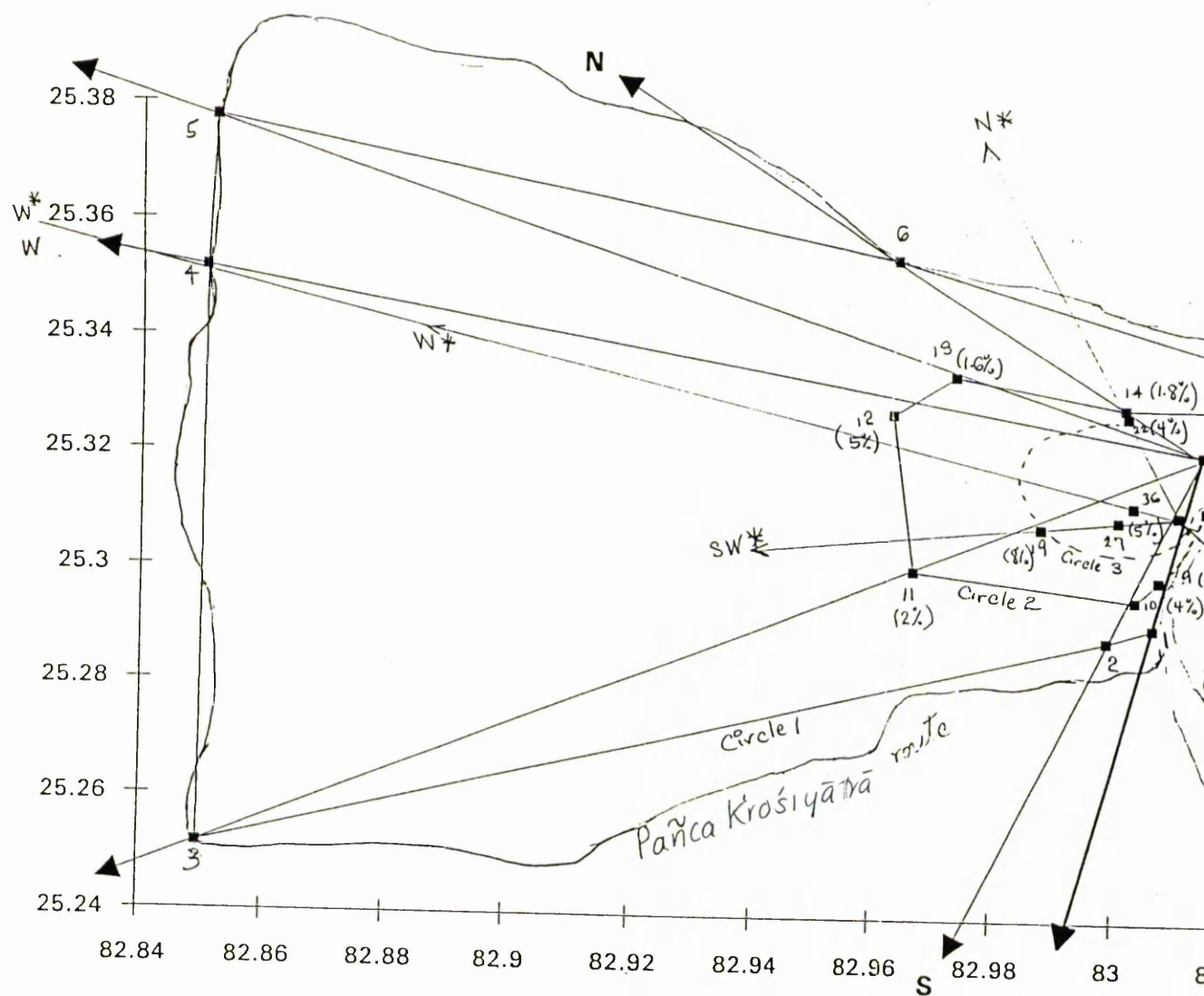


Fig. 12. Preliminary Findings by R. P. B. Singh and J. McKim Malville.



CONCLUSION

Dating the fifty-six Vināyaka *Maṇḍala*

This thesis has, for the first time, documented and dated each of the fifty-six Vināyakas in Banaras; it has shown that they mark out a *maṇḍala* of Kāśī itself which they protect and grant access to in a manner which guarantees success; it has also shown that this concept of a Kāśī *maṇḍala* and the role of the Vināyakas within it was well understood by those who compiled the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, even though they never refer to the fifty-six Vināyaka grouping as a *maṇḍala*. The question that remains to be answered is when and by whom this concept of fifty-six Vināyakas was first established. Although no absolute and provable answer can be given to this question, since the required historical evidence does not exist (and nor is it likely that it ever did, at least not as an inscription or record), what can be done is to offer a hypothesis of greatest probability based on the use of circumstantial evidence and the elimination of unlikely candidates. It is this task which constitutes the Conclusion to this thesis.

The upper limit for the date of the establishment of the fifty-six Vināyaka concept must be the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* because this contains, for the first time, a complete account of the fifty-six Vināyakas, their locations, their functions and their mythological role. It will be recalled that the date established here for the *Khaṇḍa* is between 1250 and 1350 CE. It cannot be before 1200 CE, as it is a glorification of Viśvanātha as the Lord of Kāśī, and, as is known from Lakṣmīdhara's *Kṛtyakalpataṛu*, Avimukteśvara still occupied that position during the twelfth century; equally it cannot be later than 1440 CE because that was the date Śrīnātha rendered it into Telugu. In 1296 CE a Padmeśvara temple was constructed at the doorway to the Viśvanātha temple, which implies that the Viśvanātha temple had been reconstructed by that date. If one seeks to narrow the dating of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* down further, then one could suggest a date of between 1275 and 1325 CE. The question here is whether the people who compiled the *Khaṇḍa*, and who additionally had the Viśvanātha temple reconstructed, were also responsible for formulating the concept of the fifty-six Vināyakas within the overall purpose of cosmologising Kāśī and placing it under the Lordship of Viśvanātha.

There are a number of difficulties with this proposal, however. The first is the name and the nature of the god. The name used consistently throughout the *Khaṇḍa* is Vināyaka, a name still used of the images in Banaras today. Gaṇeśa is used, as is Gaṇapati, but far less often and nearly always as Lord of the Gaṇas, that is, as the Lord of another group of Śiva's servants. By the time of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, the names Gaṇeśa and Gaṇapati were more likely to have been

used than Vināyaka, because by then Gaṇeśa had developed further into an independent deity and had an established position in the *smārta pañcopāsana pūjā*. The third quadrant of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*, chapters fifty-one to seventy-five, interestingly deals almost exclusively with the members of the *smārta pañcopāsana pūjā*, which was well established by this time, in that it begins with Sūrya, followed by his alternate, Brahmā, then deals with Gaṇeśa, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Durgā. While it was certainly the purpose of the Khaṇḍa to subordinate all to the Lordship of Śiva, the reduction of Śiva's son to the status of Vināyaka would be strangely anachronistic for this period since by then Gaṇeśa had status, independence, and several constituencies of followers. Granted, Puranic works are often deliberately anachronistic; nevertheless, the concept of Vināyaka used in the text is an early one and Gaṇeśa's method of deluding the citizens of Banaras reflects, in precise detail, the technique of Vināyaka possession given in the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* of between the third and fifth centuries CE. More will be said shortly on the conception of Vināyaka used, but if a grouping of such images were to have been established at the time of the Khaṇḍa it is likely that a more evolved conception of the deity would have been used, and probably a different name.

However, if the name and nature of Vināyaka seem anachronistic in the Khaṇḍa, producing a representation of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa which is unlikely for the period, it could be argued that the wealth of topographical detail given in the location of the Vināyakas was clearly gained at first hand and that Lakṣmīdhara, writing in the twelfth century, mentioned only the Pañca-Vināyakas and Dhunḍhi in his survey of Banaras, which argues against the grouping being in place during the Gāhaḍavāla period. Taken together, these points would suggest that the launching of the concept of the fifty-six Vināyakas was broadly contemporary with the compilation of the Khaṇḍa. But Lakṣmīdhara cannot be taken as evidence because of the idiosyncratic methodology he employed, only giving those sites and shrines which had already been mentioned in a Purāṇa, and thus of necessity excluding Vināyakas other than those six: even if the fifty-six Vināyakas did exist in Lakṣmīdhara's time he would not have recognised them in his text. With the argument from Lakṣmīdhara invalidated, the argument from the precision of the topographical details given in the Khaṇḍa works against the case for a late date. The individual names and precise location of each Vināyaka, it could be argued, implies that at the time of the Khaṇḍa they had been established and were widely known, a process which could have taken centuries.

The two most powerful arguments against associating the compilers of the Khaṇḍa with the formulation of the concept of the fifty-six Vināyakas, however, are the locations and dates of the individual images. A significant number of the Vināyakas, twelve, are situated in what, in the period concerned, were Muslim quarters of the city, and a number of others are located in mixed quarters. It is unlikely that Vināyaka images could have been installed in these locations even under the most benign Muslim rule. If this is the case then the Vināyaka concept must

have been established before 1194 CE. This is further supported by the dating of the individual images. At the end of Chapter Four there is a table which shows the Vināyakas classified as to their respective periods. The first column contains eleven Vināyakas which, in spite of the period being shown as seventh to twelfth century CE, could all belong to the tenth century or earlier. If one adds to these eleven the Pañca-Vināyakas, which were the prototype of the five Moda Vināyakas and include Dhunḍhi, and if one also adds Dehalī and Siddhi Vināyakas, who mark the west and east respectively and are known from early texts, then there are eighteen which are known to be in place by the tenth century. Furthermore, all the directions are represented except for the south-west, and the circles are all represented except for circle six, which was the area subject to the greatest levels of iconoclastic destruction. Giving the number of the circle after the name of the Vināyaka, the spread can be envisaged thus: **north**: Vikaṭadvija (2); **north-east**: Kharva (1), Varada (3), Kāla (5); **east**: Siddhi (1), Modakapriya (3); **south-east**: Abhaya (3); **south**: Ekaḍanta (3); **south-west**: none; **west**: Dehalī (1), Kūṣmāṇḍa (2), Gajākarṇa (5); **north-west**: Cintāmaṇi (4), Jyeṣṭha (5). The Pañca-Vināyakas cannot be assigned to any particular direction, but belong to circle seven. Thus one third of the Vināyakas, representing all but one direction and all but one circle, were in existence in the tenth century. It can be argued that their alignments and their distribution in the circles later described in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* are sufficient to suggest strongly that the entire group and the concept itself was in place during the tenth century, and therefore that the compilers of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* cannot have been responsible for the formulation and execution of the concept of the fifty-six Vināyaka group.

The argument from the dating of the Vināyakas just given to disqualify the authors of the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* equally disqualifies the Gāhaḍavāla dynasty. They certainly had great power and prestige and they were known to have been patrons of religion and sacred sites all over the north of India. They were Vaiṣṇavas but they were known from their inscriptions and edicts to have been tolerant towards Śaivas and Sauras. If they had established such a grand concept in Banaras, however, it would probably be known today either from inscriptions or from Lakṣmīdhara, who could scarcely have ignored what his own patrons had done. But the dating of the individual Vināyakas rules them out, as it does the preceding dynasty in Banaras, the Kalacuris. The Kalacuris were known to be ardent Śaivas: they made grants to Śaivite causes and institutions and one of their later kings, Karṇadeva, moved his capital from Prayag to Banaras and built the Karṇameru temple in the north of the city. But this did not happen until midway through the eleventh century CE, which is too late if the circles of Vināyakas were established by the middle of the tenth century.

It is thus necessary to investigate the reigning dynasty of ninth- to tenth-century north India, the Pratihāras, as the possible instigators of the fifty-six Vināyakas. As has been shown in Chapter One, the Pratihāras had been around for a long time. Originally from the west of

India, they made their way over the whole north of India and, having conquered the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and the Pālas, they were the sovereign power in north India during the ninth and the tenth centuries. Under their rule, literature, art and architecture flourished, and their remains give evidence of highly sophisticated architecture and sculpture. They also proved to be great patrons of the religious centres as well as of the various religious groups within their kingdom, be they Vaiṣṇavas, Śaivas, Sauras or Jains. Although there is no epigraphic evidence, it can be assumed that the spread of the *pañcopāsana pūjā* took place under their rule, as is shown by the construction of *pañcopāsana* temples. The sculptures dated to the Pratihāra period show that Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa worship was prevalent throughout their whole kingdom. Kakkuka, a local ruler of the Jodhpur Pratihāra clan, commissioned the Ghatiyala pillar on which four Vināyakas faced the four cardinal directions. This pillar not only symbolises the dynasty's affinity for Vināyaka, it also alludes to the directional character the god embodied in this sculpture and, more importantly, gives evidence of Vināyaka being associated with the merchant classes, as it was constructed to protect the traders in all the four directions. Banaras was situated at the eastern border of the Pratihāra kingdom, but was of considerable importance. It was during Pratihāra rule that Kāśī became the foremost *tīrtha* of India, thereby overshadowing Prayag and Gaya. There are no inscriptions to demonstrate the rise of Kāśī as a *tīrtha*; but it is known from Puranic sources that by the tenth century Kāśī was firmly established as the most important *tīrtha* of the country. The association between the Pratihāra rulers and the rise in the sacred standing of Kāśī has never been demonstrated, and it does certainly not fall within the scope of this thesis, but it can be safely stated that, taking into consideration the royal patronage of the Pratihāras to innumerable shrines, temples and *tīrthas*, they must have played an important role in the process.

That the Pratihāras were active in the Banaras area is shown by the presence of some of the earliest Pañca-Vināyaka panels, dated to the early ninth and to the early tenth century, and the remains of miniature temples, dated to the same period, all of which have been discussed above. The Pañca-Vināyaka panels also provide evidence of the importance of Pañca-Vināyaka worship, which was the prototype of the present veneration of the Moda Vināyakas. However, the most significant evidence of the Pratihāra presence in Banaras is a land grant issued by Vināyakapāla in 931 CE, in which a village outside the city was granted to a Brahmin. Historians dealing with the Pratihāra period agree that the identity of this Vināyakapāla is obscure; however, he is considered by many to be the same as Mahīpāla, the son of Mahendrapāla. Vināyakapāla was possibly an epithet given to the king at a later date, a suggestion which is supported by the fact that he also had the name Herambapāla as another epithet or title. The use of these epithets of Mahīpāla needs to be examined within the context of this Conclusion. Why did a king who was known to be a Sūrya worshipper receive two epithets associated with Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa? The answer to this question is neither absolute nor provable, but the most probable explanation would be that Mahīpāla, despite being a Sūrya

devotee, displayed an affinity for Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa. Could it be suggested, therefore, that this Pratihāra ruler is to be considered the dynamic force behind the organisation of the fifty-six Vināyakas? There are several elements which support this hypothesis. The first is the epithet Vināyakapāla itself. Why would a king receive such a name if he had no connection with the elephant-headed god? The name Vināyaka in this context is further significant since it demonstrates that in the Pratihāra period this name was even more prevalent than the name Gaṇapati or Gaṇeśa, and it also shows the widespread standing of the god, since a king bore his name. A second element which supports the hypothesis proposed above is the dating of Vināyakapāla. The land grant was issued in 931 CE, thus suggesting that Vināyakapāla was ruling the north of India in the first half of the tenth century. This period corresponds with some of the earliest Vināyakas. The presence of Pañca-Vināyaka panels further indicates that the Pratihāras had been in the area from the beginning of the ninth century, which contextualises the organisation of the Vināyaka group as one of the many religious works these rulers undertook. Considering Vināyakapāla, 'the protector of Vināyaka', to be the possible commissioner of the group of fifty-six Vināyakas, it is necessary to examine the possible reasons that might have inspired such a commission, as well to consider just what such a fifty-six Vināyaka organisation implied.

It has been argued above that by the middle of the tenth century Kāśī had acquired the supreme position amongst the *tīrthas* of India. Considering the spread of the Pratihāra empire and the importance of their royal patronage, it can be surmised that if Kāśī acquired such status under their protection, it would not be unusual for the Pratihāra rulers to want to emphasise their role as the protectors of Kāśī and Avimukteśvara. One of the main functions displayed by the group of the fifty-six Vināyakas is that of protecting the sacred territory of Kāśī. Vināyaka had risen to prominence in the Pratihāra period and his main characteristics were that he granted protection, success in undertakings, and good fortune. His protective function and association with Śiva must have been the main reasons why Vināyaka, and not any other deity, was singled out to provide the main protective circle around the holy territory of Kāśī, although other deities do play a supporting role. However, besides his protective role, Vināyaka performed a scriptural function in the holy area, and here it is possible to see why, within a Śaiva context, there is no conflict between being a Sūrya worshipper and being a worshipper of Vināyaka. The *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* makes it clear that Rudra appointed Vināyaka to create obstacles in the performance of worship; that after the rites to propitiate the obstacle-creating Vināyakas and the Grahās, the goddess Ambikā was to be asked for success; and that the fruits of the *Vināyaka Śānti* were that 'He who always performs the *pūjā* to the Āditya and makes the *pūjā* of the Svāmi and Mahā Gaṇapati (Śiva), obtains success' (verse two hundred and ninety-four). There are a number of points here that need attention. First, the above passage makes all the linkages needed between Vināyaka, Śiva and Sūrya. In this context it needs to be remembered that there are two extremely elaborate structures in Banaras, the fifty-six Vināyakas and the Āditya

temples which are arranged with astronomical precision. The original temples are lost but the sites may well have been of the Pratihāra period and may have belonged to the same initiative as the organisation of the Vināyakas. Certainly the Ādityas are given a place of prominence in the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa*. But it is the concept of Vināyaka which is important here. Kāśī is about salvation and success in Kāśī is to obtain salvation. Success here is not about worldly success as might be expected from Gaṇeśa the patron deity of traders.³⁶⁶ The *siddhi* that the Vināyakas guarantee to the worshippers is that they are not obstructed in their worship of the other deities they approach, especially Śiva, of course, and that this worship free from obstacles will be successful; that is, it will guarantee salvation. This is a more sober and appropriate conception of Vināyaka and one entirely in keeping with the sanctity of Kāśī. It also retains scriptural authority and must be why the name of Vināyaka is always used of the group, never that of Gaṇeśa with his more colourful and worldly associations.

But what is it that was being proposed in organising the concept of seven circles of Vināyakas? In examining whether the fifty-six Vināyakas constituted a *maṇḍala* it was concluded that they did not, because there was only one *maṇḍala*, and that is Kāśī itself which the Vināyakas mark out and protect in each of the eight directions. The fifty-six Vināyakas cannot be separated from this conception of the *maṇḍala* of Kāśī, which is a huge conception implying that Kāśī is a microcosm of the entire cosmos as well as containing all the holy sites of India. Certainly Banaras had obtained the status of the preeminent *ūrtha* by this period; it seems that it was also during this period that the conception of taking this further into a full symbolic cosmologisation was initiated, and that inherent in this conception was that Kāśī was a *maṇḍala*. The organisation of the fifty-six Vināyakas was therefore of much greater significance than might at first sight appear.

Since the organisation of the Vināyakas in Banaras was accomplished during the tenth century, the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* should be considered as the textual and mythological finalisation of the grand concept within the more specific purpose of establishing the Lordship of Viśvanātha. Within the concept of Kāśī as a *maṇḍala* the Vināyakas have an important place, as is clear from the detailed description and the geographical information provided by the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* which shows an established tradition of worshipping these Vināyakas. It might have been that there were ritual texts or even small Māhātmyas which described the specific worship of the fifty-six Vināyakas; however, no such evidence has been found, and thus this is speculation. Once the *Kāśī Khaṇḍa* was written it was the blueprint for the numerous reconstructions of the city and its sites which were made necessary by the exigencies of history. In this capacity, as in many others, it has served the Vināyakas well.

³⁶⁶ This is not to deny that the Pratihāras might not have had a secondary political motive in supporting Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa, namely to encourage the support of the mercantile classes.

It is then necessary, in conclusion, to investigate the group of fifty-six Vināyakas asking why certain Vināyakas were included and why others were excluded. Considering the status that Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa had acquired by the middle of the tenth century, there can be no doubt that there were many Vināyaka statues in Banaras by that time. An obvious answer to this question would be that Vināyakapāla, or the Brahmins who actually conducted the organisation of the Vināyaka group, chose to include the most significant and important Vināyakas present in Kāśī at that time. Although this no doubt was an important criterion, there are other factors which would have been taken into account. It has been shown in this thesis that the fifty-six Vināyaka group was organised directionally, seven circles of Vināyakas in the eight directions. The aspect of directionality, therefore, should not only be considered as a significant criterion in the establishing of the group, it must have been the determining element. Once it was agreed that the Vināyakas should be ordered according to the eight directions, it then was a matter of deciding to include those Vināyakas which occupied important positions in those eight directions. Their proximity to water and to Devī shrines definitely added to the importance of the Vināyakas. The link between the Vināyakas and the goddess was suggested as early as the *Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra* and attained further reinforcement in the passage from the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* referred to above. In iconography, Vināyaka became represented with the Mātṛkās from the sixth century CE onwards, thus suggesting that the association with the goddess was firmly established. Vināyakas such as Kūṣmāṇḍa, Durga, Bhīmacāṇḍa and Maṅgala are still positioned in the shadow of Devī shrines. Other Vināyakas such as Dehalī, Siddhi and the Pañca-Vināyakas must have acquired a significant independent position within the religious life of the city and could therefore not be ignored. The position of Dehalī Vināyaka at the western gate of the sacred territory of Kāśī is interesting: he is not in the vicinity of any other major shrine and his function as 'doorkeeper' clearly must have been established by the time the fifty-six Vināyakas were organised, for he is the most western point, marking the border.

One of the ways of establishing a new symbolic concept is to establish it ritually as well as textually. An interesting point to make is that the outer circle of Vināyakas forms the Pañcakrośī Yātrā. Puranic sources composed around the ninth and tenth centuries describe the Kāśī kṣetra as having its middle point in Madhyameśvara and the radial point on Dehalī Vināyaka. Would it be too bold to suggest that the whole Pañcakrośī Yātrā originated from the outer circle of Vināyakas, a circle which was based on the position of Dehalī Vināyaka as the western guardian, and that this was the device decided upon by the authors of the grand concept to perpetuate the conception of the Kāśī *maṇḍala* ritually? If this was the case, it has proved to be brilliantly successful. The more modest Vināyaka Yātrā seems to have fallen into disuse but it, too, together with the fifty-six Vināyakas themselves, has done its job. In the first instance they have granted success to pious people performing the rituals in a proper way. However, within the context of the *maṇḍala* this function can be explained in a different way as well. By

performing the Vināyaka Yātrā the devotee also enters into the sacred *maṇḍala* of Kāśī, and the Vināyakas, through granting success and removing obstacles, allow the devotee to obtain *mokṣa*, for Kāśī is 'Mokṣadā'.

Glossary

Abhaya mudrā	a gesture made with raised hand, signifying protection.
Abhiṣeka	consecration, anointing, sprinkling.
Āditya	a synonym for the Sun god. There are twelve Ādityas in Banaras.
Āgamas	Tantric or Śaivite treatises, scriptures.
Agastya	the saint who was the guru of the Vindhya mountains and who played an important part in the <i>Kāśī Khaṇḍa</i> and in Puranic mythology.
Airāvata	the elephant of Indra.
Akṣamālā	rosary of beads.
Ambikā	goddess, in the Gṛhya Sūtras one of the archetypal forms of Pārvatī. Related to Vināyakas in the <i>Yājñavalkya Smṛti</i> .
Ānandavana	'forest of bliss', an epithet for Banaras.
Añjali	hollowed hands raised together to the forehead in salutation.
Aṅkuśa	a weapon with a sharp metal hook attached to a wooden handle, a goad.
Annapūrṇā	'rich in food', an epithet for the wife of Śiva.
Aparājitapṛchā	a Śilpa Śāstra of the thirteenth century.
Āratī	the circling of the oil lamp before the statue of the god or goddess.
Āsana	a seat or seated posture.
Āśrama	a place of retreat for sages, yogis and students.
Aśvamedha	the Vedic horse sacrifice.
Assī	the rivulet in the south of the city of Banaras.
Avatāra	incarnation. This term is mainly used for the different incarnations of Viṣṇu.
Avimukta	the 'never forsaken', another name for Banaras.
Ayudha puruṣa	personification of Viṣṇu's weapons, often represented in doorways.
Bali	a type of offering which was used to propitiate <i>yakṣas</i> .
Bhadrāsana	a throne, a seated posture with the legs crossed for a <i>yogin</i> or saint.
Bhairava	the terrible aspect of Śiva.
Bhūta	a category of evil spirits, ghosts.

Bīr	a folk deity believed by some to be a descendant of the <i>yakṣas</i> . Derived from the term <i>vīra</i> meaning 'hero'.
Bodhisattva	someone who has attained enlightenment but remains on earth to help others attain <i>nirvāṇa</i> .
Brahmā	the 'creator' god, in iconography represented with four heads.
Brāhmaṇas	a group of texts belonging to the Veda.
Brahmin	a member of the priestly class.
Buddhi	one of the wives of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa, also wisdom, intelligence.
Caitya	a Buddhist shrine.
Cakra	discus, one of the emblems of Viṣṇu.
Cāmara	fly-whisk, originally the tail of a yak.
Candra	the moon.
Candra bindu	a crescent moon with a dot.
Caturthī	'the fourth' day of a Hindu month.
Cauk	a market place, a square (also spelled chauk).
Cintāmaṇi	wishing-jewel.
Cunār	a small city upstream from Banaras where there is a strategically situated fort.
Dakṣa	the father of Satī, the wife of Śiva. He performed a sacrifice to which Śiva was not invited, thus causing Satī to burn herself.
Dāna	a ritual gift.
Daṇḍa	staff.
Daṇḍapāṇi	the staff-holder; in Banaras he is an attendant of Śiva and is situated near the Viśvanātha temple.
Danta	tusk, tooth.
Darśana	the auspicious viewing of a deity.
Daśāśvamedha	the location on the Ganga where the ten-horse sacrifice took place.
Deva	a god, deity.
Devapaṭṭa	carved stone slabs depicting the gods of a certain place.
Devī	a goddess.
Dhanuṣa	a bow.
Dharma	righteousness; duties and laws, also translated as religious duties.
Dhruṇḍhi	name of a Vināyaka in Banaras; means literally 'the searcher'.
Dhūpa	incense, fragrant gum; can also mean 'the heat of the sun'.
Dhyāna mudrā	a posture of sitting in meditation position.
Diggajas	the four or eight elephants supporting the universe.
Dikpālas	guardians of the directional quarters.

Divodāsa	the king who ruled Banaras after the drought and expelled the gods.
Durgā	an epithet for the consort of Śiva, represented as having eight arms and riding on a lion or tiger.
Dvārapāla	doorkeeper.
Dvibhaṅgha	twofold bend, a graceful slightly bent stance.
Ekadanta	epithet for Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa, the 'one-tusked one'.
Gada	the mace, one of Gaṇeśa's weapons.
Gāhaḍavālas	a dynasty which ruled over north India in the twelfth century CE.
Gajānana	elephant-faced, epithet of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa.
Gaṇa	grotesque dwarf, goblin-like creature.
Gaṇapati	'Lord of the troops', an epithet for Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa, the most common name for the deity in Maharashtra.
Gāṇapatyas	the sect considering Gaṇeśa as the one supreme deity.
Gaṅgā	the most sacred river of India, also is considered to be a goddess.
Garbha Gṛha	the <i>sanctum sanctorum</i> of the Hindu temple.
Gayā	a sacred city situated in Bihar, famous for its <i>śrāddha</i> associations.
Gāyatrī	a type of hymn.
Ghāt	literary 'landing places' or 'banks'. In the context of Banaras, the stone steps leading to the Ganga.
Ghatīyālā	a small town near Jodhpur where the famous Ghatiyala pillar topped with four Vināyaka statues was found.
Ghee	clarified butter, sometimes used in ceremonies and rituals.
Guggula	the name of a resin-like plant which was used in ceremonies of protection against the Vināyakas.
Gurucaritra	Marathi religious treatise composed in 1538 CE by Sarasvatī Gaṅgādhara.
Harikeśa	a <i>yakṣa</i> who, being a Śiva devotee, received a boon from Śiva.
Hariścandra	a legendary king who, by a curse, lost his kingdom and had to work on the burning <i>ghāts</i> of Banaras.
Hastimukha	'elephant-faced', an epithet for Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa.
Hiuen Tsiang	Chinese Buddhist monk of the seventh century CE who travelled in the Indian subcontinent.
Indra	the warrior god of the Vedic times, riding on the elephant Airāvata.
Janapada	a land division corresponding with a kingdom at the time of the Buddha.
Jātaka	the stories telling of the former lives of the Buddha.

Jaṭāmukuta	a complicated arrangement of braided hair in chignon style.
Jñāna Vāpī	the well of wisdom, situated near the Viśvanātha temple.
Jyeṣṭhā	the elder sister of Lakṣmī, considered to be evil and creating misery.
Jyotilinga	a ' <i>liṅga</i> of light' or manifestation of Śiva as a shining pillar of light.
Kāla Bhairava	a form of Śiva as 'Lord of death'; in Banaras he is the <i>kotwāl</i> or policeman of the city, offering protection to all its inhabitants.
Kalaśa	vase.
Kamala	lotus.
Kamaṇḍalu	an oblong water vessel with a handle and a spout.
Kapāla	skull.
Kapālamocana	the place in Banaras where the skull of the murdered Brahmin fell out of the hand of Śiva.
Kapiśa	city in Afghanistan, also called Begram.
Karaṇḍa mukuṭa	a crown shaped like a conical basket.
Khaḍga Khetak	a sword.
Khaṇḍa	a section in a text.
Kośala	princely state in the north of Bihar at the time of the Buddha.
Kṛtyakalpataru	twelfth-century Nibandha on the Dharmaśāstras of that time, written by Lakṣmīdhara.
Kṣemaka	one of the <i>rākṣasas</i> taking up residence in the deserted city of Banaras.
Kṣetra	literally 'field', also used to denote a 'sacred space'.
Kubera	king of the <i>yakṣas</i> , the guardian deity of the northern direction and the protector of wealth.
Kumbha	pitcher.
Kuṇḍa	pond.
Kūpa	well.
Kuśa grass	a sort of grass which is often used as an offering to the gods.
Laḍḍus	round-shaped sweets, especially offered to Gaṇeśa.
Lakṣmī	the goddess of wealth and good fortune.
Lakṣmīdhara	twelfth-century scholar and <i>rājaguru</i> of the Gāhaḍavāla kings. Composer of the Kṛtyakalpataru.
Lalitāsana	a sitting position with one leg crossed on the seat and the other placed below or hanging.
Lambodara	big-belly, one of the epithets of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa.
Lāṅgala	a plough.
Liṅga	the phallus, the symbolic emblem of Śiva.

Lopāmudrā	the virtuous wife of Agastya.
Loṭā	a small copper or brass water vessel.
Magadha	the ancient Bodh Gayā.
Mahābhārata	Epic describing the war between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas. Contains the Bhāgavad Gītā. Written between 200 BCE and 200 CE, although it received many appendices throughout history.
Mahāsmaśāna	the 'great cremation ground', an epithet for Banaras.
Māhātmya	glorification; a literary genre glorifying a sacred place or a god.
Makara	a sea monster resembling a crocodile.
Mālā	garland.
Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra	a collection of texts describing domestic rituals, composed between 600 and 200 BCE.
Maṇḍala	literally a 'circle' or 'circular representation', depicting the cosmos.
Maṇḍapa	hall, pavilion.
Mandāra	the mountain on which Śiva retreated after being expelled from Kāśī.
Maṇikarnikā	the place where the earring fell; one of the five most important <i>tīrthas</i> in Banaras, now associated with the main burning <i>ghāṭ</i> .
Maṭh(a)	monastery.
Mathurā	one of the seven sacred cities of India, known as the birthplace of Krishna.
Mātrkā	mother-goddess.
Matsya	the fish incarnation of Viṣṇu.
Māyā	illusion.
Modaka	sweetmeat, the favourite sweet of Gaṇeśa.
Modaka pātra	<i>modaka</i> bowl.
Mohalla	neighbourhood, quarter in a town or city.
Mudgara	a mace or club used for physical exercise.
Mudrā	hand gesture.
Mukuṭa	crown.
Mūlaka	a radish.
Mūrti	image, picture, idol.
Mūsala	a pounder.
Mūṣaka	the rat vehicle of Gaṇeśa.
Nāga	mythical snake divinity.
Nāgayajñopavīta	a snake used as a sacred thread.
Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa	the composer of the Tristhalisetu, lived in Banaras in the sixteenth century.
Nava Grahas	the nine planets of Indian mythology.

Nibandha	digests or compendia of Puranic stories.
Nidhi	wealth.
Nikumbha	in some of the Purāṇas he is described as a <i>rākṣasa</i> , whereas in others he fulfils the role of 'Gaṇapati'. In the <i>Kāśī Khaṇḍa</i> he is one of the <i>gaṇas</i> sent by Śiva.
Nṛtya mudrā	dancing pose.
Nūpurās	anklets.
Padma	lotus.
Padmāsana	a seated position in which the crossed legs are kept on the thighs.
Pañc(a)	five.
Pañcāyatana	a type of temple which has four subsidiary temples at the sides of the main shrine.
Pañcopāsana pūjā	worship in which five deities are honoured: Śiva, Viṣṇu, Devī, Sūrya and Gaṇeśa or Brahmā.
Paraśu	battle axe.
Parvan	a segment of the <i>Mahābhārata</i> .
Pāśa	noose.
Pāyasa	milk-rice.
Piśācas	sort of goblin, evil-spirited being.
Piśācamocana	a sacred place in Banaras where the <i>piśācas</i> were liberated.
Pīṭha	base, sacred seat of a goddess.
Pratihāra	literally 'doorkeeper'; name of a dynasty coming from Gujarat and reigning over the whole of north India in the ninth and tenth centuries.
Prayāga	the epithet for Allahabad, which used to be the most important <i>tīrtha</i> of India before Kāśī took over that role.
Pūjā	public or private worship. The ritual of the <i>pūjā</i> normally consists of seventeen steps, but can vary according to the region and caste.
Purāṇa	a collection of stories, composed to maintain the tradition of myths, legends and rituals.
Qīlā	fort.
Rājghaṭ	the plateau north of the Varana river on which the first settlement of Banaras was found.
Rākṣasa	a category of demons.
Rāmāyaṇa	the epic describing the life of Rāma, the eighth incarnation of Viṣṇu.
Ratna Kumbha	gem pitcher.
Ratna Mukuṭa	a bejewelled crown.

R̥gveda	one of the most ancient, if not the most ancient collection of Vedic hymns.
R̥ṣi	a sage.
Rocana	a red lotus flower, also a substance used in the rituals for protection against Vināyakas.
Rudra	the Vedic prototype of Śiva.
Rudravāsa	epithet for the 'forest of bliss', the dwelling place of Rudra.
Samabhaṅga	standing position without the body being bent.
Saṅga	confluence.
Śārnātha	place north of Banaras where the Buddha is said to have given his first sermon.
Satī	the consort of Śiva who burnt herself to death when her husband was not invited to the sacrifice arranged by her father.
Śaiva	a Śiva worshipper.
Śakti	literary 'energy' or 'power', mainly applied to denote 'female energy', also used to describe the consorts of Śiva.
Śaṅkha	conch shell, one of the emblems of Viṣṇu.
Saptamātr̥kās	seven mother goddesses.
Śara	an arrow.
Śāstra	a scriptural work dealing with the sacred teachings.
Seth	caste of moneylenders.
Siddhi	one of the wives of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa.
Śilpapaṭṭa	a carved stone slab representing the gods or a sacred city.
Śilpaśāstras	collection of texts dealing with art and architecture.
Sindūr	red powder made from lead, used to anoint <i>murtīs</i> .
Śiva	one of the main deities of Hinduism, considered to be both creator and destroyer. The protecting deity of Banaras.
Śivaśarman	character in the <i>Kāśī Khaṇḍa</i> , a virtuous Brahmin who makes a trip to the seven holy cities of India and after his death visits the lokas of the directional deities.
Skanda	the other son of Śiva and Pārvatī, brother of Gaṇeśa, born from six mothers, the Krittikās. Has a peacock as vehicle and is considered to be a bachelor. Other epithets include Kumār and Kārtikeya.
Śmaśāna	the cremation ground.
Śrāddha	rituals performed for the dead, to propitiate the ancestors.
Stotriya	a hymn of glorification.
Stambha	pillar.
Stūpa	a domed Buddhist mound in which relics of the Buddha are kept.

Sukhāsana	sitting position of bliss.
Śukla pakṣa	the bright half of the month.
Śūla	a spear.
Śūrpakarṇa	elephant ears.
Sūrya	the Sun deity.
Svadhā	an invocation when making an offering.
Svāhā	exclamation to the gods when making an oblation.
Svasti	well-being, good fortune.
Svayambhū	self-manifesting, often used to described <i>lingas</i> and other images.
Tālāb	Arabic synonym for <i>kuṇḍa</i> , a pond.
Ṭaṅka	a hoe, hatchet.
Tāraka mantra	the ' <i>mantra</i> of the crossing' uttered by Śiva in the ears of the dying.
Ṭilā	a small hill or mound.
Tīrtha	a 'crossing place', meaning a place from where one transcends The mundane world; mainly used to describe sacred and pilgrimage places.
Tīrthacintāmaṇi	'the wishing jewel of the <i>tīrthas</i> ', written by Vacāspati Mishra in the fifteenth century CE.
Tīrthaprakāśa	'the light of the <i>tīrthas</i> ', written by Mitra Mishra at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Nibandha dealing with the pilgrimage sites of India.
Tīrtha Yātrā	a pilgrimage.
Tribhaṅga mudrā	'thrice bent'; standing position in which the body is bent three times.
Trilocana	one of the five sacred <i>tīrthas</i> in Banaras.
Tristhalīsetu	'the bridge to the three cities', a Nibandha written by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa in the sixteenth century, describing the pilgrimage sites of India.
Triśūla	trident.
Toraṇa	ornamental gateway at the entry of <i>stūpas</i> and temples.
Ūrdhvaliṅga	ithyphallic.
Vāhana	vehicle of the gods, usually an animal.
Varāhadamstra	the tooth of a boar.
Varaṇā	the river north of the city, flowing into the Ganga at Rajghat.
Vārāṇasī	epithet for Banaras, the city between the Assi and the Varana.
Vaṣaṭkāra	the exclamation during a <i>pūjā</i> .
Vindhya	range of mountains north of the Narmada river.

Vighnakartā	the 'creator of obstacles', epithet of Vināyaka-Gaṇeśa.
Vighnadāna	the 'giver of obstacles', epithet of Gaṇeśa.
Vihāra	a Buddhist monastery.
Virāsana	'position of the hero', a sitting position.
Viṣṇu	the 'preserver god', depicted holding a conch shell and a disk.
Viśvanātha	'Lord of the universe', an epithet for Śiva and name of Śiva in Banaras.
Vrata	ritual fast, a vow.
Vyālayajñopavīta	a <i>yajñopavīta</i> made of a snake.
Yajña	a sacrifice.
Yājñavalkya Smṛti	a collection of domestic rituals, compiled between 250 and 600 CE.
Yajñopavita	sacred thread.
yakṣa/yakṣī	a category of demi-gods depicted with dwarfish features. In early times they were connected with the fertility cult.
Yātudhana	a demon.
Yoginī	a female divinity.

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Abbreviations

AITM	Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology.
BHU	Banaras Hindu University.
EI	<i>Epigraphica Indica</i> .
KKH	<i>Kāśī Khaṇḍa</i> .
MW	Monier-Williams, <i>A Sanskrit-English Dictionary</i> .
TC	<i>Tīrthacintāmaṇi</i> .
TP	<i>Tīrthaprakāśa</i> .
TS	<i>Tristhalīsetu</i> .

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